

# **Human Rights in the Soviet Union**

**Al Szymanski**

**To the disappeared persons and thousands of others  
who have been killed in Latin America since the  
mid-1960's for their advocacy of freedom; and for  
D.R.**



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This book like all others is, in C. Wright Mills' words, a product of the intersection of biography and history. Its coming into being has been a result of the social forces operating on myself as author, acting through my family, my schooling, my structural position as a US professor of sociology, and my political involvements. This book, perhaps more than others, owes a great deal to the influence of my parents who shaped my fundamental attitudes to equality, tolerance, liberty, authority and freedom. It also owes a great deal to my teachers from Ward Senior High School, through the University of Rhode Island to graduate school at Columbla University, who introduced me to the theories and debates around the questions of freedom and rights. My students and co-teachers at the University of Oregon during the 1970s provided continuing stimulation (usually critical, but sometimes supportive) which had a major impact on the development of the ideas in the book. But most of all, the ideas have been formed through my political involvements since the late 1950s.

My first political act was to join the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at the beginning of the civil rights movement in 1959. My second was, as a naive freshman, to send a letter of outrage to the student newspaper comparing the harsh penalties inflicted by the Dean of Women on female students who smoked cigarettes in their dorm rooms to the horrors of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*. In the early 1960s I defined my political commitments as two: support of civil rights for Black people, and support of civil liberties for all, especially for students who were then subject to the (since discarded) university doctrine of *in loco parentis*. I joined the American Civil Liberties Union and became an outspoken advocate of the right of all to voice their political views. As president of the University of Rhode Island S.D.S. Chapter in 1962, I was responsible, to the considerable irritation of Dean Quinn, for bringing to town the first Communist Party member in 15 years to speak publicly on the campus.

But gradually, during the mid-1960s, with the intensification of the student and Black movements, as well as the growth in my generation of support for the Cuban, Vietnamese, and Chinese Revolutions, my commitment to abstract civil liberties became transformed into an appreciation of the more fundamental rights of national liberation and self-determination.



Swept up in the political and intellectual excitement of the last half of the 1960s, I became a Marxist, but retained my earlier concern for questions of liberty and rights.

Donna Rae Crawford must be specially acknowledged as my research assistant for this book. She carefully checked the references, quotations and calculations, thereby making this work considerably stronger. She must also be thanked for her supportive friendship during the time of this book's production.

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My interest in the theoretical questions of freedom and rights has deep roots in my biography, but what compelled me to write this book was the sharp contention in the world, in the 1970s and early 1980s, between the growing forces of national liberation and socialist revolution and the weakening forces of imperialism. In response to the accelerating growth both of socialism and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world, the leading forces of the advanced capitalist countries have counter-attacked on the level of ideology. To the nationalist and socialist slogans of national liberation and workers' power they have opposed 'freedom'. By 'freedom' they mean freedom to publicly advocate whatever one wants, freedom of opportunity to get rich, freedom for professionals in the poor countries to emigrate to wealthy countries, and freedom for owners to buy, sell, hire labour and otherwise control the economy, in short 'free enterprise'. Utilizing highly sophisticated Madison Avenue techniques, a powerful ideological war has been waged throughout the world: in the advanced and in the less developed countries, and in the socialist countries themselves by way of radio and travellers. Western 'freedom' has been marketed as a counter to the rising tide of socialism.

To publicly advocate socialism in the West promptly evokes the retort: What about the lack of freedom, emigration restrictions, political prisoners,



refugees and so on, in socialist countries? Statistics on rising living standards, social security, political participation, national independence, equality, never satisfy such criticism. Necessarily, then, all socialists must take a position on the question of civil liberties/repression in the socialist countries. One tendency of the socialist movement argues that some or all of the 'so-called' socialist countries, are not really socialist, but instead new types of class societies, equally, if not more repressive than, the older types. Others answer that because of such problems as economic backwardness and foreign invasion faced by socialism where it has come to power, it has become fundamentally distorted and thus must repress significant numbers of its people in order to survive. Another sector of the left merely dismisses all evidence of political repression as 'capitalist propaganda'.

Having written a book on the basic economic and political nature of the Soviet Union, it then seemed logical to follow up by attempting to complete the work already begun with a book on what remained the most compelling political and theoretical questions: What about freedom? The position of minorities? What about women? Worker's participation and economic security? What about the dissidents? The prison camps and psychiatric wards used to suppress opposition?

The book deals with the most politically charged question of the last half of the 20th Century: that of 'freedom'. A slogan for which a great many have shed their blood and suffered persecution on *both* sides of the barricades. Probably more than any other question people's feelings about freedom (variously expressed as commitment to 'free' enterprise, to civil liberties, national liberation, self-determination or socialist revolution) run deep.



# Preface

The history of scholarship is a record of the acceptance of and resistance to the ideas of the powerful interests of the day. Bruno was burned at the stake for advocacy of the heliocentric view of the universe, Galileo was put under house arrest and forced publicly to recant his ideas, and Copernicus's works were put on the Church's Index, owing to the conflict between scientific evidence and the word of the Bible. In the late 19th and early 20th Centuries the scientific ideas of evolution fared little better. Ideas about the social world, including the characteristics of various social groups, are integrally related to the dominant political ideology and interests, and thus are rewarded, encouraged, discouraged, repressed, accepted, derided, on account of their social impact, rather than the facts mobilized in their support.

To quote Stephen Jay Gould:

... the history of many scientific subjects is virtually free from such constraints of fact for two major reasons. First, some topics are invested with enormous social importance but blessed with very little reliable information. When the ratio of data to social impact is so low, a history of scientific attitudes may be little more than an oblique record of social change. The history of the scientific view on race, for example, serves as a mirror of social movements. This mirror reflects in good times and bad, in periods of belief in equality and in eras of rampant racism. The death knell of the old eugenics in America was sounded more by Hitler's particular use of once-favored arguments for sterilization and racial purification than by advances in genetic knowledge

Gould 1981, p. 22.

Gould's comments on ideas about race apply to ideas about freedom, rights and socialism even more forcefully.

Of all social phenomena, those associated with the questions of political power, the effectiveness of different economic systems, the necessity of social inequality, and the potentialities and effects of different modes of production, are the most central and thus particularly subject to acceptance or rejection on the basis of factors extraneous to fact. The questions with the greatest impact and hence where, often, fact is permitted only a minimal



role, are those relating to the potentialities of socialism in general, and the inherent compatibility of 'freedom' and the Soviet model of socialism in particular. This book engages the question in which the ratio of fact to social impact has been the lowest. (Less because facts have not been available to those who want to find them than because the denominator is so enormous.) In the last few decades, however, the numerator has grown considerably. By marshalling facts which have become known to most careful Western analysts over recent years, but which are seldom combined to draw the implicit logical conclusions, this book attempts to increase the ratio of fact to social impact to a level generally applicable in the social sciences.

Intellectuals are political beings whose daily activity deeply affects the political atmosphere of their countries. Usually, the bulk of intellectuals of a given nation are mobilized in support of its prevailing institutions. Such has certainly been the case in the United States and the other 'Anglo-Saxon (Parliamentary) Democracies' in the post-World War II period. The centre of intellectual gravity during this period has been the effort to discredit the liberating potential of socialism, sometimes in quite sophisticated and indirect ways, while celebrating the institutions of capitalism and formal parliamentary forms. To quote Chomsky and Herman:

Quite commonly, intellectuals have a strong moral attachment to some favored state -- usually their own -- and have devoted themselves to lauding its alleged achievements (sometimes real) and concealing its abuses and crimes. At times, the 'herd of independent minds' has . . . succeeded in virtually stifling opposing views.

(Chomsky and Herman 1979b, p. 23)

. . . every effort must be made to discredit what is called 'socialism' or 'communism.' In its more vulgar forms, the argument is that 'socialism' or 'Marxism'. . . leads inevitably to Gulag. . . . In the United States, this tactic has become virtually a reflex. Bolshevik and later Stalinist crimes have regularly been exploited as a weapon against movements seeking reform or revolutionary change. (Chomsky and Herman 1979b, p. 297)

. . . the general passivity and obedience on the part of the population that is a basic requirement in a state committed to counter-revolutionary intervention was overcome in significant measure, and dangerous feelings of sympathy developed towards movements of national liberation in the Third World. It is an important task for the intelligentsia in the post-war period to reconstruct the ideological system and to reinstate the patterns of conformism that were shattered by the opposition and resistance to the US war in Indochina.

(Chomsky and Herman 1979b, p. 17)

The US Central Intelligence Agency well understands the power of ideas -- as did its predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services. In fact 'psychological warfare' is a fundamental front of the war between socialism and capitalism.



Everything issued or pronounced, about the socialist societies and the degree of rights within them, by the authorities of Western governments and the spokespeople of the corporations, as well as by those associated with the institutions established by and funded by them, must thus be evaluated in this light. According to the Office of Strategic Services 'psychological warfare' (to which most of the US CIA's budget is allocated) is defined as:

The co-ordination and use of all means, including moral and physical, by which the end is to be attained – other than those of recognized military operations, but including the psychological exploitation of the result of those recognized actions – which tend to destroy the will of the enemy to achieve victory and to damage his political or economic capacity to do so; which tend to deprive the enemy of the support, assistance, or sympathy of his allies or associates or of neutrals, or to prevent his acquisition of such support, assistance, or sympathy; or which tend to create, maintain, or increase the will to victory of our own people and allies and to acquire, maintain, or increase the support, assistance and sympathy of neutrals.

(Office of Strategic Services, 1949, p. 99)

The all pervasive influence of the institutions of advanced capitalism permeate not only the work of the mainstream intelligentsia, but also that of the great bulk of the 'radical' intelligentsia. For conservative and 'socialist' intellectuals and groups to compete to produce the most anti-Soviet analyses and polemics is not uncommon. The very concepts and definitions employed by the bulk of the Left in the English-speaking advanced capitalist countries are, in good part, a product of mainstream liberal discourse – a discourse quite compatible with monopoly capitalist institutions in times of stability – rather than a product of the Marxist or mainstream socialist traditions. For example, the definition of socialism in traditional anarcho-syndicalist terms of decentralized participatory democracy, and the attention given to intellectual freedom (regardless of its consequences for ordinary working peoples' lives) are very much a product of the classical liberal, rather than the Marxist, tradition. These two axioms of radical discourse in the 'Anglo-Saxon Democracies' alone are sufficient to serve to mobilize the great bulk of otherwise liberal, progressive and social democratic intellectuals to participate in the Great Distortion and become (often indirectly) part of the general NATO mobilization against real, existing socialism and national liberation.

The high stakes involved in the seemingly 'scholarly' debates on questions related to 'freedom' and 'socialism', and above all in questions at the intersection of these two topics, has meant that, for the proponents and opponents of a given thesis, the required standards of scholarship and proof are unequal. The scales are so heavily weighted on the side of those scholars who argue in favour of their state's positions that, in the normal course of events, they are guaranteed an intellectual victory however few their facts or overwhelming the evidence mobilized by their opponents; this applies



equally in socialist, and in advanced capitalist countries. The only difference is that because they are relatively new; socialist countries often employ more direct means to accomplish results obtained just as effectively, but more subtly, by capitalist countries. To quote Chomsky and Herman again:

The beauty of the democratic systems of thought control, as contrasted with their clumsy totalitarian counterparts, is that they operate by subtly establishing on a voluntary basis . . . presumptions that set the limits of debate . . . . Those who do not accept the fundamental principles of state propaganda are simply excluded from the debate (or if noticed, dismissed as 'emotional', 'irresponsible', etc.).

The new propaganda line has been established by endless repetition of the Big Distortions and negligible grant of access to non-establishment points of view. . . . (Chomsky and Herman 1979b, pp. 30, 300)

The theses defended in this book are, of course, unacceptable intellectual discourse both in the US and the other 'Anglo-Saxon Democracies'. Their social impact is such that they can, and most probably will, be dismissed by the majority as 'irresponsible' without first examining the data and arguments presented.

This book has been written with, perhaps, insufficient caution, but with the sense of an obligation to intervene in the political debates about the potentials of national liberation, socialism and capitalism. Its emotive reception is a reflection of the book's focus on the very nerve of capitalist ideology. I can only hope that a significant number of readers will be able to contain their prior judgments and the commitments they bring to the reading of the book to nevertheless evaluate my arguments reasonably objectively.

Eugene, Oregon  
June 1983



**Other Books by Al Szymanski**

*The Capitalist State and the Politics of Class*, Winthrop, 1978

*Sociology: Class Consciousness and Contradictions*,

Van Nostrand, 1979

*Is the Red Flag Flying?* Zed, 1979

*The Logic of Imperialism*, Praeger, 1981

*Class Structure*, Praeger, 1983



# 1. Introduction

The quest for freedom, manifested in the demands for self-determination, liberation or 'human rights', has been an increasingly dominant issue throughout the world since the end of World War Two. The USA and the USSR, each in their own way, have made the issue of freedom a central point of concern in their contention. Each maintains that only under their system can freedom be 'real', and that under that of the other it cannot exist. In this book the notion of freedom and the concept of human rights are scrutinized, and the degree to which basic freedoms or rights are realized within the USA and the USSR are compared.

In the ideological war between socialism and Western capitalism, the West has attempted to make formal civil liberties the central issue between the two systems. The Western media abundantly disseminates stories of Soviet, Cuban, Vietnamese and East German refugees 'fleeing to freedom' in the US, of the difficulty of emigration from the Socialist countries, the 'repression' of Soviet dissidents, and so on. President Carter's 'human rights' campaign of the 1977-80 period was premised on the assumption that the US would be successful in its propaganda war with the Soviet Union by attempting to establish the battlefield on the grounds of civil liberties, and interpreting the flight of professional and business people from Socialist countries as a flight from repression to 'freedom' in the US. The fairly high level of formal civil liberties obtaining in the US, it was implied, proves the superiority of Western capitalism, while emigration from socialist countries proves the failure of socialism. Further, it was argued that the alleged absence of formal civil liberties in Socialist countries was of greater significance than the rights to national liberation or civil liberties of most of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Dictatorships such as those in Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Shah's Iran, must ultimately be supported in the fundamental interests of the peoples of these countries, creating the conditions for the later development of formal freedom, or preventing the loss of such freedom as they already have. The topic of this book is thus central to the leading ideological and social struggle of our time: socialism vs capitalism.



## **Freedom: Some Definitions**

The term 'freedom' has meant many things. It has been seen as a negative concept: freedom *from* constraints — e.g. state control — as freedom for each individual to do whatever he or she wants, irrespective of the wants and needs of others; that is, *formal* freedom. Conversely, it has been seen as a positive concept: freedom for each individual to be able to achieve the satisfaction of their basic wants and needs; that is, *substantive* freedom. The latter definition focuses on the degree to which a society facilitates the realization of national, and women's, rights, job security, a high standard of living, social security, and so on. Many formal schema develop a hierarchy of freedom and rights which attempts to counterpose 'substantive' against 'formal' freedoms to the relative advantage/detriment of the other. For example, in the post-1917 world, Western capitalist forces have commonly celebrated the formal freedom from constraints — for individuals or businesses — while socialist forces emphasize the attainment of substantive freedom by formerly oppressed classes and peoples.

Before we can systematically analyse the degree of comparison between the US and the USSR on the question of 'freedom', it is essential to define our terms. To avoid the ultimate philosophical question of determinism vs free-will, and attempt to defuse the emotive content of the term 'freedom', generally the term 'rights' rather than 'freedom' will be used. 'Rights', then, is used to mean social freedom, as distinct from 'free will', or other philosophical or ideological concepts of 'freedom'.

A 'right', then, is the *legitimate* (i.e. adjudged as 'just' or 'proper') claim of an individual or group on society. 'Legitimate' implies that a claim is regarded by those in authority as 'just' or 'proper', and that when a claim is made, it is normally successful. 'Rights' include both the socially guaranteed claims on society's resources (positive) *and* the social guarantee of being allowed to exist on equal terms with others, i.e., not discriminated against (negative).

There is sometimes a tendency to restrict use of the term 'right' to societies with a state. This approach sees rights as something that state power must necessarily guarantee or grant, i.e., an immunity, protection, or access to goods or services. Consequently, that rights cannot exist in stateless societies: in egalitarian or fully communist societies where, since there is no oppression, immunities or protections are superfluous, and since there is no state no claims can be made on its resources. A 'right', in this book, is considered to be a claim on society legitimized and guaranteed by *either* a state, *or* by society itself without the mediation of a state. Legitimate claims on society (rights) can be guaranteed by force (e.g. the police *or* informal action) *or* by consensus/social pressure, and thus do not *necessarily* require a state.

Five types of rights may usefully be distinguished:

*1) Property rights:* the right, individually or collectively, to own productive



property, including the right to employ, or alternatively, not to be exploited or denied participation in decision making: to alienate property as one chooses, or alternatively, not to lose one's patrimony, rights in property or one's job, and to manage the property as the individual or one's collective sees fit (including the right to invest or not, dispose of the product, operate an enterprise and allocate labour as one sees fit).

2) *Distribution (or consumption) rights*: the right to a guaranteed decent minimum standard of consumption. This includes access to education and health-care, either free or economically accessible to all; retirement and disability benefits; adequate housing; the right to a job and/or unemployment benefits.

3) *Civil rights*: the right to full legal equality for all, including: women, national minorities, ethnic or 'racial' groups, ensuring equal access to education, jobs, social services, the political process, and so on, on the same terms as members of the national majority (or majority ethnic group) and men. This includes the right to use and develop one's own language, to celebrate and develop one's own culture; as well as the right to be free from all discrimination and interpersonal humiliations, such as racism and sexism.

4) *Civil liberties (or formal rights)*: the most basic of these personal rights are what I shall term level I liberties, including the right to leave one's job and find another, the right of internal migration and travel, the right of free marriage and divorce, reproductive rights, the right to privacy, the right to be secure in one's personal property, the right to religious beliefs and practice, personal beliefs, and so on. Civil liberties also include the right to fair treatment by the state, especially by the criminal justice system (including such due process rights as a fair trial; to know the charges against one; to be able to confront one's accusers with contrary evidence: an impartial judge/jury and a right to a speedy trial: freedom from police harassment and torture, and other inhumane punishments etc.).

5) *Political rights*: the right to participate in the society's political decision making processes, and in all other institutions in which one is involved (e.g. neighbourhoods, child-care centres, schools, etc.). (Participation in economic institutions is defined here as part of property rights).

These liberties, which might be considered as *process rights*, I shall term level II liberties since their exercise affects other members of society to a greater extent than the exercise of level I liberties; and thus, historically, have been more subject to limitation in the interest of trans-individual considerations.<sup>1</sup> Level III liberties include the *advocacy rights* to persuade others, such as freedom of the press, public speech, assembly, religious conversion, and so on, including the right to advocate and organize to achieve the destruction or undermining of existing political and property



arrangements, the exercise of which by their very nature will have a direct impact on others. Also included in this third category of liberties is the right to travel or to emigrate from one's country of origin. The exercise of this right may affect both the national economy (through loss of labour power) and the legitimacy of a society's basic institutions (owing to individuals returning from other countries having acquired ideologies that are opposed to those hegemonic in their native country). The potential social impact of the exercise of the level III liberties have resulted in historical states only rarely guaranteeing them.

In Western capitalist countries, as we have already noted, interpretations of freedom or rights tend to focus on individual civil liberties (formal liberties) based on the notion that *individuals* should have an absolute or at least an *a priori* just or proper claim on society to be left alone to realize their desires without 'unwarranted' constraints. 'Unwarranted' normally means that the only legitimate constraints a society may impose are those that limit the individual's right to constrain the rights of other individuals (e.g. 'my freedom to move my arm stops where another person's nose begins'). Defenders of Western 'civilization' frequently proclaim such formal liberties in absolutist, *a priori* and universalistic terms, but no society has ever allowed wholesale, total civil liberties for any appreciable period of time, neither has any non-Western or socialist society ever totally denied civil liberties to all its people. In every kind of society 'some people are more free than others', i.e., the dominant class enjoys a greater degree of civil liberty to express itself publicly, and to freely associate without 'unwarranted' restraints than do those that present a threat to the prerogatives of that class. Likewise, the definition of 'unwarranted restraint' differs widely in different types of societies and at different periods. From time to time the Western 'democracies' have banned public protests against slavery or war, or public utterance in favour of revolution, on the grounds of warranted restraint (see Chapter 6). While in most socialist societies the rationale for bans on publishing material favourable to the reinstitution of private property is that of 'warranted constraint'. No modern society has ever effectively denied the right to free speech or association to all their people all the time, but at times all societies have formally denied them to certain groups.

Distributive (or consumption) rights, the socially recognized legitimate individual or group claims for the satisfaction of basic material needs, i.e. economic rights, are the core of every society. The basic function of all societies is to produce the means to satisfy the material needs of its people. A society's ability to successfully perform this function is to a great extent a decisive factor for its success or decay. Indeed, if these fundamental needs remain unfulfilled the other four rights become meaningless. The exercise or restriction of Civil liberties, as well as political and participatory rights, are usually concerned with the distribution of material goods and services. Further, civil rights are typically manifested in the reality of such economic rights for different groups; and property rights are also important in that they provide differential access to material goods.



The political rights, or rights to participation in the society and the institutions in which one is involved within a society must be distinguished from the class nature of society, or the degree to which the actual policies and processes of that society differentially benefit different groups. It is possible for a particular group to benefit even though it is formally excluded from voting or holding office (e.g., the merchant bourgeoisie in feudal societies), or alternatively, a group possessing formal rights of participation might not be a beneficiary of state policies. Socialists, for example, would argue that this is true of the working class in parliamentary democracies where the 'false consciousness' induced by the capitalist mode of production leads the working class to vote against its own interests.

Property rights subsume three distinct types of property, which must not be confused: (1) personal property; (2) simple, private, productive property which one operates oneself; and (3) property which employs the labour power of others.

No major society in the 20th Century denies to its people the right of personal property (considered here as a basic or level I liberty). All societies consider it just for an individual to own such personal effects as clothing, and for the most part one's own living unit (although there are some exceptions for reasons of urban planning). Personal property is distinct from productive property, i.e., property that produces goods or services which have economic value. Contemporary productive property is of two types: the property owned by a small farmer, artisan or professional and primarily worked by the owner without the employment of other than immediate family members (petty bourgeois property), and capitalist, or productive property, which primarily is operated by hired labour power. Forms of productive property can also utilize slaves, serfs, semi-serfs or sharecroppers rather than wage labourers.

In some societies the right to acquire and dispose of productive property, including the right to hire or dismiss the labour power of others for a wage is guaranteed. This is the most fundamental right of distinctively capitalist economies in the sense that capitalism would be impossible without such a right. In other, namely socialist, societies such as the USSR and China, such a right is considered to be an unwarranted infringement on the property rights of others, including the infringement of the right to job security and the right to participate in the decision making of one's enterprise; thus these societies explicitly forbid such forms of property.

It would seem that the right to employ the labour power of others in productive property in contrast to the right to either personal or simple private property in production is inherently contradictory. That is, the exercise of the right of one person to ownership of productive property which employs others necessarily denies those employees the exercise of their right to possess private productive property. This is not to say that the formal universal right to buy productive property (if one has the resources), and the corollary right to sell one's labour power is *logically* contradictory, only that its exercise *necessarily results* in a concentration of



property rights in the hands of a minority; i.e., proletarianization (or deprivation of property rights) for the majority. Nor does the contradictory nature of private property in the means of production imply that such a right is not or never could be 'progressive', or that it could never advance the other four types of rights.

Civil liberties and, in part, civil rights are based on the notion of freedom from formal state or social constraints on individuals and social groups. This is in contrast to the substantive distributive rights, as well as to the rights of participation, which are positive legitimate claims on society (in contrast to the legitimate claim to be free of unwarranted constraints). But like civil liberties and civil rights, economic and participatory rights can be consistently stated in universalistic terms, and thus like them differ from property rights. Property rights are inherently and necessarily contradictory, at least in their formulation as *individual* property rights.

Substantive distributive rights and civil rights are based on *authentic needs* rather than on conscious desires or wants, as is the case with both civil liberties and participatory rights. Distributive and civil rights, then, must primarily be assessed by objective criteria of the extent to which basic human needs (economic security, housing, education, social welfare, lack of discrimination, cultural autonomy, etc.) are satisfied, *independently* of conscious desires or wants. Conversely, assessments of the degree of formal civil liberties and participatory rights can be made *independently* of the substance of what people choose to say, do, or how they vote; even while in the real world the actual exercise of these rights is typically constrained if they are used to undermine the dominant social institutions.

Rights are neither abstract nor universal. To ask the question 'is x free?' or 'does y enjoy rights?' is to ask the question 'freedom for whom?' or 'rights for whom?' In any modern society, freedom and rights are distributed differentially according to class position. This is most clearly manifested in the case of property rights, that are inherent in class position. If productive property is collectively owned, it necessarily follows that no individual has the right to employ others or to buy or sell that property, i.e. a corollary of collective property is the denial of the right to private productive property. Conversely, the essential right of capitalist society, the right to employ the labour power of others and to alienate productive property at will, systematically denies the exercise of property rights to those that are employed. A similar factor is at work, although not usually so apparent, in the operation of all the other forms of right.

The substantive right for all members of society to a secure job and all that implies, necessarily denies to some members of society the right to dismiss workers from wage labour, or to enjoy a high living standard while others starve. The right to a relatively equal distribution of income denies the right to become a millionaire, while the right to become a millionaire necessarily denies the rights of some to a decent standard of living.

The right to political participation in the decision making process of the institutions in which one is involved (e.g. apartments, work places)



necessarily negates the rights of owners to make decisions according to their will, just as private property in apartment buildings and factories necessarily denies the right of tenants and workers to authentically participate in decision making. Likewise, authentic political democracy for the whole society necessarily negates the right of those with a claim to make societal decisions (the heirs of royalty, the richest individuals, etc.), just as the right of generals, royalty, or other formal or informal dictators necessarily denies the rights of popular self-determination.

Civil liberties are also necessarily contradictory although not in an immediate sense as with political, distributive or property rights. A society in which everyone, equally, partook of full, formal liberty to say publicly or write and publish whatever they wanted, can be conceived of in the *abstract*. However, in reality, such has not been, nor could ever be the case for any significant time in a society in which material benefits, property and involvement in decision making, are radically distributed in favour of a few. In any class society, the right to organize and to speak out without interference from the state is eventually utilized to organize against an unequal distribution of income and property. Given the fact that few benefit at the expense of many, civil liberties combined with political rights tend to lead to government policies which undermine property and wealth, i.e. civil liberties and political rights sooner or later come into contradiction with the right to private property.<sup>2</sup>

What is most important in type III civil liberties is the right to advocate what is in one's own interest, above all in one's class interest, not the right to be a dilettante or an academic. Civil liberties in the real world have a definite class content. Further civil liberties within a class society have no substance unless actually exercised in pursuit of class interest.

Lenin argued that formal civil liberties normally have little relevance or meaning for working people. He maintains that the civil liberty of 'democratic republics':

is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in reality, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slaveowners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that 'they cannot be bothered with democracy', 'they cannot be bothered with politics'; in the ordinary peaceful course of events the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.<sup>3</sup>

Unequal wealth and access to places of assembly, the media, leisure time, verbal skills, education and other resources mean that 'equal right' effects very *unequal* substantive outcomes:



... freedom of the press ... is a deception so long as the best printing-works and the biggest stocks of paper are appropriated by the capitalists, and so long as capitalist rule over the press remains. ... In capitalist usage, freedom of the press means freedom of the right to bribe the press, freedom to use their wealth to mould and fabricate so-called public opinion ... the defenders of 'pure democracy' ... prove to be deceivers of the people, who, with the aid of plausible, fine, but thoroughly false phrases, divert them from the concrete historical task of liberating the press from capitalist enslavement. ... The capitalists have always used the term 'freedom' to mean freedom for the rich to get richer and for the workers to starve to death.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, the contradiction between civil liberties/political rights and private property rights came to the fore in all but about a dozen capitalist countries at some point in the 1940-80 period, and resulted in the abolition of general civil liberties/political rights. The association of civil liberties/political rights with private property in production is thus an exceptional occurrence, made possible only under exceptional conditions (e.g. rising living standards and increases in economic and civil rights for the majority of the population). This is underlined by the reality of only a small handful of capitalist countries in Asia, Africa or Latin America allowing civil liberties/political rights to the majority of their population, and by the fact that the two dozen or so stable parliamentary capitalist democracies are the richest countries in the world, all of which, until recently, have experienced a consistent growth in working-class living standards, as well as in the expansion of workers' distributive rights.

Civil liberties and the right to formal political participation in the state (universal franchise) can be maintained only as long as they are *not* effectively used to secure substantive economic and property rights for the majority of the population, i.e. only as long as they remain formal rights and are *not* utilized to secure substantive rights. That is to say, people are free to speak in favour of expropriating the wealth of the few and turning it over to working people only as long as few people listen. Such has been the history of almost all capitalist countries in the 20th Century (e.g. Southern, Central and Eastern Europe in the period between the two World Wars, Latin America, the ex-French and British colonies, Turkey, the Philippines, Indonesia, etc.). Ultimately, the exercise of civil liberties and the right of political participation by the working classes is incompatible with the right of the wealthy to their privilege and property. Likewise, the right of the working class to collectively own the means of production and distribute their product in an egalitarian manner is incompatible with the former wealthy property-owning class's right to organize to take their property back (i.e., it is incompatible with any *universal* rights of association, public speech, and due process).

The question of the degree to which formal civil liberties and the rights of political participation are permitted the working people of capitalist



societies historically is reduced to the question of the extent to which they are exercised in the interest of realizing the substantive distributive rights of working people, as well as in the attempt to secure collective property rights (i.e. the expropriation of private property in the means of production). In the 20th Century, in the most advanced capitalist countries, it has been common, historically, to allow universal franchise and civil liberties for even Socialists and Communists to advocate the expropriation of private property and to allow their parties to put forward candidates for election. They have, however, seldom won a parliamentary majority and been in a position to implement their programme. Czechoslovakia in 1946-7 was a notable exception. The capitalist class control of most of the media and education, and the inertia of traditional values, handed down from generation to generation and reinforced by interpersonal networks, normally succeeds in obtaining a sufficient number of working people to lend their — at least passive — support to the party of property and order; thus, short of a major 'legitimation crisis' the propertied class is able to perpetuate its system. In times of crisis, if a progressive coalition wins an election, or increasing anti-private property measures are taken or threatened, then usually either the military intervene or a fascist party is brought into power. The result in either case is the negation of formal civil liberties and the right of popular political participation, in order to guarantee the right of private property in the means of production.

The definition of freedom in terms of authentic *needs* instead of consciously formulated wants or desires (which may be termed false, that is, not correspond to authentic needs) may be generally more relevant. Socialization, the media, education and interpersonal interactions can create or perpetuate false consciousness of a group's or an individual's real needs. Formal civil liberties and the right of participation can thus be employed by working classes in the interests of the propertied classes, e.g. by voting for pro-business parties, or by joining pro-business organizations. The existence of mere formal liberties tells us little about the real conditions of people. The degree of substantive freedom, and whether or not civil liberties and rights of participation are used in the interests of working people, are the more fundamental questions.

Civil rights would not be problematic unless fundamental inequality existed between various ethnic/national/sexual groups in a society. The right to freedom from social humiliation and discrimination and, in the case of minorities, to develop one's own culture and institutions, is historically predicated on the previous oppression of a group. Of the five types of rights defined here, that of civil rights is the farthest removed from class considerations. Logically speaking, while it is true that normally, cultural/'racial' groups are essentially socially *defined* by the class position of the majority of their members, there is also generalized discrimination/humiliation applied to all members of the group *regardless* of whether or not they are in the class typical of their group. Moreover, other social groups, such as women and/or perhaps 'homosexuals' are *not* defined in terms of class because they



are present in all classes. Thus, while civil rights are historically associated with social inequality this does not *necessarily*, logically imply class right or 'right against right' as do the other types of rights. Logically, it is thus possible to have a class society in which authentic civil equality (full realization of civil rights) exists for all. However, given the *social logic* of class societies which generates racism and sexism, it is unlikely that such would ever actually come to pass.

There are inherent contradictions *within* a given right — such as the right to private property. There are also inherent contradictions among the different rights. The claim for the abstract and universal character of rights thus cannot stand. In reality, it is not a question of a 'higher' or 'lower' level of universal rights for all; but rather a question of 'right against right', the right of one class against the right of another. As long as class society exists, or as long as its residues remain and hence the seeds of its rebirth exist, there can be no universal and abstract *a priori* rights applicable to all.

The question of 'right against right' can become rather complex, as there are often more than two classes, or principles of rights, involved. For example, imagine a four cornered argument concerning who has a rightful title to a piece of land in 19th Century France. The descendant of the former feudal lords of the land would claim that the land was rightfully his on the grounds of primogeniture and the inalienability of land, since feudal law gave first born sons exclusive right to all their fathers' land. A capitalist, with a formal deed to the land, bought perhaps from the peasants who were the original beneficiaries of the expropriation of the feudal lord's ancestor (an expropriation which the aristocracy never granted legitimacy) would reject the rules of feudalism and claim the land, on the basis of having bought it 'fair and square' — in an 'equal' contract — from the peasants who were forced by bankruptcy to sell. The farm workers, who actually produced the crops on the land through their labour being, let us assume, socialists, would reject both the claims arguing instead 'that the land belongs to those that work it', 'to each according to their labour'; or perhaps simply, as disciples of John Locke, they would argue that the basis of property is labour, and since they perform the labour, the land and its products are theirs. Still another group could make a claim contrary to all three. Either the pre-feudal indigenous inhabitants (descendants of the primitive Gauls perhaps), or the contemporary unemployed poor, could assert a claim to the land and its products on the basis of *need*.

There is no absolute criterion to distinguish between these four mutually contradictory claims. There is no absolute right, independent of class or time. Historically, such conflicting claims have been resolved not by philosophical argument, but by arms. For example, in France, the question of land ownership was resolved by the French Revolution in 1789, just as the original claims of the primitive Gauls had been negated by force of arms and their land became the property of aristocrats. The particular system of property right adopted in 1789 was reaffirmed against socialist challenges in 1871 and again in 1944–47. This mode of resolving conflicting



claims over rights has historically also proved to be decisive in the disagreement between the indigenous inhabitants of Australia and the Americas and their European settlers, as well as in the philosophical differences between the former landowning and capitalist classes of China, Russia, Cuba and Vietnam and the working people and peasants of these countries.

Realism vis-à-vis the resolution of arguments over rights cannot, however, be reduced either to cynicism or a 'force theory' of right: those that win the battles write the philosophy books. Judgments *can* be made about conflicting rights and, in the long run, the forcible settlement of rights questions, tend to conform to the secession of 'higher' or more 'progressive' rights. There is no absolute and universal right independent of classes, but at any given time the rights claims of a given class can be judged more *progressive* in the dual sense of: (1) facilitating the development of productive forces, and thereby serve as the basis for the greater wealth and higher living standards of society; and (2) advancing civil rights, distributive rights, participatory rights and real civil liberties for a larger segment of the population. Because a greater number of people benefit from the realization of more progressive rights, in the long run, in a struggle of right against right, the more progressive class normally triumphs. Thus, because more people benefited from the capitalist organization of French society than from feudalism, capitalism eventually triumphed. Capitalism, by allowing for an extension of rights (of all five types defined here) for more people, consolidated greater popular support than could feudalism; for similar reasons the socialist revolutions in China, Russia, Vietnam and Cuba triumphed and were consolidated. Socialism, by extending all five types of rights for the working class and peasantry of these countries, secured and consolidated their support in the struggle against the ruling classes.

The question of superior or more progressive right is historically specific. What is progressive and *realistically* realizable at any given time, hence a 'superior right', may not be so at another time. Further, rights tend to become transformed into their opposites. A progressive right at one time, advancing the productive forces and expanding all five types of rights for more people, may well develop into its opposite at a future time, and instead hinder the development of the productive forces and lead to the repression of most rights for most people. There can be no trans-historical evaluation of rights any more than there can be a trans-class evaluation.

Engels, emphasizing this point, argues that not even slavery could be judged to be absolutely right or wrong either from the viewpoint of society as a whole or the slaves themselves. Engels argued that one point in historical development slavery was progressive, and hence a superior right:

It is very easy to inveigh against slavery and similar things in general terms, and to give vent to high moral indignation at such infamies. Unfortunately all that this conveys is only what everyone knows, namely, that these institutions of antiquity are no longer in accord with our present conditions and our sentiments, which these conditions



determine.

It was slavery that first made possible the division of labour between agriculture and industry on a larger scale, and thereby also Hellenism, the flowering of the ancient world. Without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art and science; without slavery, no Roman Empire. But without the basis laid by Grecian culture, and the Roman Empire, also no modern Europe. We should never forget that our whole economic, political and intellectual development presupposes a state of things in which slavery was as necessary as it was universally recognized. In this sense we are entitled to say: Without the slavery of antiquity no modern socialism . . . Slavery was an advance even for the slaves; the prisoners of war, from whom the mass of slaves was recruited, now at least had their lives saved, instead of being killed as they had been before, or even roasted, as at a still earlier period.<sup>5</sup>

In the same spirit nowhere do Marx and Engels condemn capitalism in universal and abstract terms, neither do they similarly praise or advocate socialism. On the contrary, Marx and Engels write positively of capitalism as a progressive system, at a historically specific point, and defend capitalist right over the previously dominant forms of right.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors'.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarcely one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground – what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?<sup>6</sup>

Engels goes on to argue that without capitalism and the historically specific predominance of capitalist right, socialism would not be a realistic historical possibility, i.e. socialist right is premised on the previous triumphs and achievements of capitalist right:

Only the immense increase of the productive forces attained by modern industry has made it possible to distribute labour among all members of society without exception, and thereby to limit the labour time of each individual member to such an extent that all have enough free time left to take part in the general – both theoretical and practical – affairs of society. It is only now, therefore, that every ruling and exploiting class has become superfluous and indeed a hindrance to



social development, and it is only now, too, that it will be inexorably abolished, however much it may be in possession of 'direct force'.<sup>7</sup>

In Lenin's words: 'Capitalism is evil compared with socialism. Capitalism is good compared with medievalism, compared with small production, compared with bureaucracy . . .'<sup>8</sup> In places, Lenin even expresses enthusiasm for the benefits of capitalism for the working class under pre-capitalist conditions:

In countries like Russia the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of capitalism. The working class is, therefore, most certainly interested in the broadest, freest, and most rapid development of capitalism. . . . The bourgeois revolution is precisely an upheaval that most resolutely sweeps away survivals of the past, survivals of the serf-owning system (which include not only the autocracy but the monarchy as well) . . .<sup>9</sup>

## The Historical Logic of Restricted Emigration and Exit<sup>10</sup>

As we have argued, no right is absolute, since the exercise of virtually any right affects the realization of the rights of others. The right of — say — a doctor to emigrate is no more absolute than the right of, for example, peasants in a poor country to receive the medical care the doctor has been trained to give. Neither, in an absolute sense, is one superior to the other. If, by revolutionary or some other means, legislation is enacted requiring doctors to spend a specific number of years attending to the medical needs of the peasants in their country of origin, before they are permitted to emigrate then, from the upper middle-class doctors' viewpoint, their right to emigrate is seriously infringed. The peasants, however, are more likely to assert that their own and their children's right to a healthy life is more important. But in reality, such philosophical considerations are resolved not by intellectual discourse but by social revolution and emigration restrictions. Whether or not one right is more progressive than the other can be determined on the basis of which right advances the forces of production and the living standards of a poor country and which right best serves to advance the other rights of the greater number of people in the country. The application of such criteria enables one to understand the rationale of the imposition of emigration restrictions in many post-revolutionary countries.

The right to international travel and emigration is one of the two most celebrated 'unalienable rights' — the other being the right to express publicly ideas contrary to official ideology. To illustrate the underlying forces both of the establishment and celebration of 'human rights' an examination of the history and logic of the imposition of exit restrictions is revealing.

From their origins, states have routinely regulated the entry and exit of



persons to and from their territories in accordance with what they judged to be their national interest. Invariably, the 'rights' of emigration and immigration or international travel have been a derivative of the 'community interest'. Thus the variations over time and among countries both in the restrictions on the geographical mobility of persons and the celebration of the right of exit must be understood in these terms.

Virtually all empires and kingdoms, city-states and republics, ancient and modern, have restricted the right of their nationals to travel overseas or permanently to emigrate. The population of a country has historically been part of the wealth that should not be allowed to leave and thereby add to the wealth of another power. This principle, in fact, became a central and explicit tenet of mercantilism in 17th and 18th-Century Europe. Many city-states of Ancient Greece, such as Sparta and Argos, forbade their citizens to go abroad, but citizens of the more commercially developed Athens (but not their slaves) were permitted to do so. For Sparta the consideration of maximizing the number of soldiers for its army was the determinant, while for Athens it was the need to engage in external commerce. Since the wealth of most societies largely depends on international trade, merchants have generally been exempted from travel restrictions.

Political restrictions on nationals leaving their country have always been common. Persons suspected of potentially engaging in plotting with foreign powers, or of seeking to acquire an ideological or religious education at variance with the official state ideology or religion, have normally been prohibited from overseas travel. Aristocrats and the upper classes were normally subject to restrictions on overseas travel by royalty, since they might conspire with the king's enemies or be away when the king needed them. It was, however, far easier for these classes to travel outside their country of origin than it was for peasants or labourers, whose labour was vital for the creation of national wealth. Artisans and other skilled workers were often especially restricted, as states were anxious to keep them for themselves and prevent them being acquired by other states.

Conversely, certain political or religious groups have frequently been encouraged to leave their country, or even exiled from it owing to their potentially ideologically disrupting effects; for example, French Huguenots who refused to give allegiance to the state religion. Some groups have been considered to be both redundant to a country's needs as well as competitors for relative advantage, and often have been expelled, e.g. Jewish or Indian merchants, and more recently Asians from Uganda and Ghanians from Nigeria.

A common corollary of emigration restriction is the encouragement of immigration. Normally, if political/religious ideological homogeneity could be maintained, traditional states or empires encouraged the immigration of additional labourers and potential soldiers – especially those with vital skills. England, for example, encouraged the immigration of Dutch artisans in the 17th and 18th Centuries because they were of great value in developing the economy; simultaneously emigration of her own artisans was



very difficult. Since the 1830s, the US has actively encouraged immigration because of the need for labour in its rapidly industrializing economy, while throughout the mid-19th Century continental Europe discouraged it, in order to maintain its level of labour resources.

European states did not relax restrictions on emigration until commercialization had produced a surplus population. At this point emigration was encouraged, since the alternative would have been either political disruption or heavy state welfare expenses to pacify the unemployed ex-peasants. Holland, the premier commercial economy in the world in the first half of the 17th Century was the first major country to relax emigration restrictions. The next area to allow significant emigration was Ireland, where British commercial agriculture produced a surplus population in the latter part of the 17th Century, followed by Scotland and England. The emigration of machinists, however, was not sanctioned by England; their skills were vital for British commercial supremacy in the emerging textile industry; mariners too, vital for British naval supremacy, were similarly restricted. During the 17th and 18th Century Britain generally permitted emigration only to British colonies, in order to secure a labour force to exploit the resources of these areas.

Throughout the late 19th Century, France maintained controls over the emigration of its population. Both her slower commercial development, and consequent absence of a surplus rural population, as well as her frequent military involvements, dictated a restrictive emigration policy. In common with most continental European states at the time, France increased the penalties for emigration in the mid-17th Century, and in 1666 instituted severe penalties for navigators, shipbuilders, sailors and fishermen who attempted to emigrate.

Occasionally the French would expel certain groups considered undesirable: the Jews in 1390 because the developing native French bourgeoisie wanted their Jewish competitors eliminated; and in the 16th Century the Huguenots who represented an ideological threat to the Catholic ideology on which the French state was based. France even placed severe restrictions on the migration of French subjects to such French colonies as Canada which as a result remained rather sparsely populated. In Canada itself, the death penalty was enacted for those attempting to leave for non-French areas without authorization.

Spain and Portugal also prevented emigration to their colonies during the 19th Century because they feared the loss of the labour power of their peasants. Although, in 1791, the Declaration of the Rights of Man proclaimed the right to leave France, in 1792 this right was suspended in the face of France's compelling need for a large army. The secret of French military strength during the Revolution and Napoleonic Wars was that it relied on a massive peasant army fighting for its own land. Restrictions on emigration were increased under the Restoration regime. Not until the 1870s did France remove formal restrictions on leaving the country. Nevertheless, administrative practices acted to deter emigration, except to the French colony of Algeria, for many more years.<sup>12</sup>



Before the 18th Century the various German principalities and kingdoms generally permitted the eastward German colonization of Slavic lands even while maintaining formal emigration restrictions to other areas. Eastern colonies such as the Hanseatic League cities around the Baltic and their hinterland German speaking settlements facilitated trade with Germany. In the 18th Century, however, the German states tightened up their emigration policies as they came to play a stronger role in economic life, and greater emphasis was given to production. The German and Scandinavian states for the most part continued to prohibit emigration throughout the early- and mid-19th Century. Austria largely restricted emigration and foreign travel throughout the 1850s, and Russia, Romania and Serbia restricted emigration until the latter years of the 19th Century. On the eve of World War I these three countries were among the few whose nationals still required official permission to leave. In the decades before World War I such permission was freely given in most cases owing to the surplus ex-peasant population that had developed within their boundaries.

The Magna Carta, signed by the English King John under pressure from his nobles in 1215, guaranteed to English merchants 'safe and secure exit' and to others freedom 'to go out of our Kingdom and to return, safely and securely, by land or water, saving his allegiance to us, unless it be in time of war, for some short space, for the common good of the Kingdom'. The serfdom prevalent in England at the time, coupled with the general poverty of the peasantry and urban labourers meant that these guarantees were specifically for the nobility and clergy. Common peasants did not normally leave even the domain of their lords without permission, and only then if their services were no longer needed, or their land was compensated for their lost labour. Even if their services were no longer needed, at least a token compensation or fine, for example a few chickens, had to be given to their lord as a symbol of their dependence.

In 1216, the year after the Magna Carta's implementation, the King suspended the exit guarantees and they disappeared from all subsequent issues of the Charter. Over the next six centuries the Common Law writ of *ne exeat regno* prevailed in English law. This legal doctrine granted the King the right to 'command a man that he go not beyond the seas or out of the realm without a licence' by issuing a writ declaring 'that you design to go privately into foreign parts and intend to prosecute there many things prejudicial to us. . . .'<sup>13</sup> Until the beginning of the 19th Century the doctrine implicit in this writ regulated the international travel and emigration of British subjects, although, with the development of a surplus ex-peasant population in the 18th Century, it was less stringently applied. The reliance of England on international trade, however, dictated the continuing guarantee of the right of merchants to travel overseas throughout the Middle Ages and the mercantile period.

From the beginning of the 17th Century all British subjects who wished to leave the Kingdom were required to possess a formal licence issued by the King (a passport). Numerous statutes were enacted during the 16th and 17th



Centuries reaffirming the royal prohibition on travel out of the country without such a licence. In the 1620s, the Privy Council adopted a regulation requiring all noblemen who wished to leave the Kingdom to have a licence signed by the King personally, and all persons of non-noble rank to have licences signed by a Royal Secretary of State. Special restrictions on exit were applied to military personnel at all times, and to everyone in times of war.

The principle of the state's right to control exit from England continued without interruption through the Commonwealth period. During the 1650s exit permits were issued by the Protectorate Council; the penalty for overseas travel without such a licence was confinement in the Tower of London. Such licences were granted only 'to persons of known affection to the State or to such as give good security'. Thus the fundamental principle of a guarantee of political loyalty and economic commonwealth prevailed whether or not a king ruled.

The movement of British clerics was especially closely regulated by the King, in order to prevent them having direct contact with the Vatican. For example, in the 14th Century the King instructed his port officials that no abbots or other religious persons were to be allowed to leave the kingdom. A general prohibition on all travel to Rome (except for merchants) was issued in the latter part of the century. Restrictions on ecclesiastics travelling overseas intensified during the 16th Century in the reigns of Henry VIII and of Elizabeth I; together these monarchs consolidated the independent Church of England and strove to protect it from the ideological influence of the Roman Church. In 1534 King Henry issued a total ban on clerics – and anyone else – leaving the Kingdom for any religious purpose, a ban that was enforced with especial rigour on religious councils. In the 17th Century a number of royal decrees were issued which prohibited children being sent overseas for religious education.

As the forces of commercialization in Britain began slowly to produce a surplus population the King became increasingly lenient in granting licences for nationals to emigrate to Britain's new dominions, especially in North America. Restrictions on overseas travel and emigration for unskilled British commoners were thus relaxed over the course of the 17th and 18th Centuries. In 1718, however, in an attempt to prevent the loss of machinists and craftsmen, Parliament passed legislation requiring that artisans be forced to deposit a cash security 'not to depart out of the realm for the purpose of carrying on their trade or calling in foreign places'.<sup>14</sup> After 1720 a further series of Acts were passed restricting the emigration of skilled workmen. The restrictions on mariners leaving England was rigorously enforced until the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Indeed one of the factors that aggravated the tension between the US and Britain before the outbreak of the War of 1812, was the British practice of apprehending US merchant ships on the high seas and removing any sailors who had been born in Britain. In 1788 the King's Attorney General reaffirmed 'the constant practice of prohibiting mariners, by proclamation, from departing the realm for the purpose of



entering into foreign service, at times when the state of Europe would render it dangerous to weaken the strength of the nation'.<sup>15</sup>

In 1803 the obstacles to emigration were considerably increased, especially for the poor, by the implementation of a Passenger Act. This limited the number of passengers that could sail on a ship bound for other than British colonies, thereby greatly increasing the cost of passage. In 1819 the British Parliament began to implement measures that facilitated the emigration of British subjects to British colonies, especially Canada and the Cape Colony. In 1824, Parliament repealed the legal restrictions on the emigration of artisans and seamen, thereby becoming one of the first countries in the world to permit the free emigration of any of their nationals. The 1903 Passage Act was abolished in 1827, and as a result the last of the British restrictions on emigration was removed.<sup>16</sup> The rapid pace of industrialization sweeping over British society at that time resulted both in a large surplus population and insufficiently high wages to provide adequate material incentives for a sufficient number of skilled sailors and craftsmen to stay voluntarily in Britain. Further, the early industrial secrets that Britain tried to protect by its emigration restrictions had, by the third decade of the 19th Century, ceased to be a monopoly of the British.

Through the mid-19th Century the various European colonial powers generally prohibited emigration from the areas under their control, especially for those of non-European stock upon whose labour power colonial wealth was based. For example, until the middle of the 19th Century the Spanish colonial administration forbade all native Filipinos to travel outside the Philippines. They did not, however, forbid the *immigration* of Chinese merchants, whose international activities were found to be most advantageous to the Spanish dominated state.

In general, the period between the 1820s and the 1880s saw the gradual abolition of virtually all restrictions on international travel and emigration throughout the world. Most countries even dropped the formal requirement to secure an exit licence or passport, neither were passports now needed for entry. Indeed, the half century before World War I was unique in so far as it was the first time when international travel within and between most countries was relatively unimpeded by politically imposed restrictions on either emigration or immigration. Millions left the commercializing societies and crossed the oceans without requiring either official permission to leave their country or official permission to work and settle in the country of their choice.

In 1914, with the outbreak of World War I however, restrictions on international travel were reimposed, initially for purposes of military security and recruitment of nationals into the armed forces. They were then maintained by most countries after 1918 and the Armistice. In the 1930s many European countries once again intensified restrictions on the emigration of their nationals. In its Emergency Powers Act of 1939 Britain once again formally restricted emigration.

During the interwar period Germany, Italy, Poland and other European



dictatorships restricted emigration of their populations on the grounds that the economic and military strength of their nations depended on keeping their populations at home (or in Italy's case, at least in her colonies). In the late 1920s Italy enacted legislation making non-approved attempts to leave the country punishable by six months in prison – or two years for attempting to leave for political reasons. Border guards were empowered to fire at anyone attempting to cross the frontier without authorization. As an Italian government official stated 'Why should Italy still serve as a kind of human fish pond, to feed countries suffering from demographic impoverishment; and why should Italian mothers continue to bear sons to serve as soldiers for other nations?' <sup>17</sup>

In 1936 Poland issued a passport law that made it illegal for a person to leave the country if there was reason to believe that he or she would jeopardize an important interest of the state or endanger security, public peace or order. The 1936 law continued to be applied by the new socialist regime until 1954 when it was liberalized. <sup>18</sup>

The classical Chinese state, like virtually all other historical states and empires, rigorously restricted the exit of its nationals from its territory. For example an imperial edict of 1712 made emigration a capital offence. In 1729, an edict was issued forbidding any person who had emigrated from ever returning to China. The Ch'ing Dynasty's especially stringent measures against emigration seem primarily to have been motivated by fears of external subversion perpetrated by returning emigres, as well as by the standard desire of states to retain the ultimate sources of all national wealth – labour power – within its frontiers.

The Chinese ban on all emigration was not officially repealed until 1894. The Western imperialist powers, however, forced China to *de facto* allow its nationals to leave by a series of unequal and humiliating treaties, beginning with the Treaty of Nanking which ended the Opium Wars. The T'sien-tsin Treaty of 1858, signed with Britain, specifically provided for legalization of the recruitment of cheap Chinese labour. It read in part:

Chinese subjects choosing to take service in the British colonies or other parts beyond the seas are at perfect liberty to enter into engagements with British subjects for that purpose. <sup>19</sup>

The US enforced a similar treaty on the Chinese state in 1868: the Burlingame Treaty, that utilized the rhetoric of 'inalienable human rights' for the geographical mobility of individuals to serve the interests of US business in securing cheap labour for West coast railway construction read:

The United States of America and the Emperor of China are cordially recognizing the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance, and also the mutual advantage of the free migration and emigration of their citizens and subjects respectively, from one country to the other, for the purpose of curiosity, of trade,



or as permanent residents.<sup>20</sup>

In view of the fact that Western imperial powers forced China to sanction the recruitment of its nationals as cheap contract labourers ('coolies') for their colonies, and to help in the construction of the US, plus the humiliating treatment accorded to these labourers including pogroms, it was not surprising that, in the post-1948 period, China's new Communist government restored the traditional emigration restrictions as a matter of national pride and to protect its people, as well as to conserve labour power to aid in socialist construction. The emigration policy in Socialist China however, has never been as restrictive as that of the pre-1842 period. Unlike the Ch'ing Empire, the Chinese Socialist state has always allowed its nationals to travel abroad or to emigrate for 'good reasons', such as education and the unification of families.

From the 1930s to the 1950s the Soviet Union tightly restricted international travel and emigration — for similar reasons to those of most states throughout history — i.e. to conserve economic and military strength and to prevent internal subversion through collusion with external enemies with the potential result of undermining the official ideology. During the 1960s and 1970s, however, as its economic, military and legitimacy situations became stronger, Soviet exit policies became increasingly more liberal. In the 1960s university educated emigrés were generally required to pay back to the state the costs of their free higher education.

By the 1970s it became relatively easy for Soviet citizens to emigrate — although a number of obstacles continued to exist in order to discourage emigration. The standard procedure for emigration at that time was the payment of 300 roubles fee for an exit visa; additionally, Soviet citizens who wished to emigrate were required to officially renounce their citizenship, including their right to return. Soviet citizens who emigrate to capitalist countries must pay a fee of 500 roubles to officially renounce their citizenship, while those citizens intending to emigrate to a socialist country must pay 50 roubles. The prerequisite of the renunciation of Soviet citizenship stresses the finality and lack of patriotism inherent in the act of emigration and is a deterrent. The total exit fees (approximately US \$1,000) charged to those emigrating to the capitalist world is considered to serve both as partial compensation for the social labour invested in the education of the departing citizen, and an impediment to ill-considered emigration.

Prospective Soviet emigrés must also secure the consent of their immediate family members. Further, members of the intelligentsia applying for exit visas commonly lose their professional positions, and must work as labourers while awaiting approval for their exit. This process usually takes time, partly in order to investigate persons desiring to leave and ensure that they are not privy to state secrets, and partly as a further obstacle to discourage emigration. Intellectuals involved in scientific or military related work are often denied permission to emigrate on the grounds that they possess state secrets. During the 1970s, not only did the Soviets liberalize the implementation of



their emigration policies (tens of thousands emigrated annually), but it also adopted a policy of enforced emigration for prominent dissidents (For example, Solzhenitsyn, Gigorenko, Z. Medvedev). In the 1970s, emigration from the Soviet Union was easier than it had been in the feudal and mercantile states of pre-19th Century Europe: by historical standards then, Soviet exit policies had become quite liberal, thus reflecting the stability, strength and legitimacy of contemporary Soviet society.<sup>21</sup>

Some socialist countries have permitted and even encouraged the emigration of those (usually of the formerly privileged class) who are ideologically opposed to socialism. Cuba and Vietnam have adopted similar policies. The object being to procure greater ideological homogeneity and remove a source of continuing demoralization. Conversely, the compelling need to retain highly skilled labour, without resorting to grossly inequalitarian pay scales, has led other socialist countries, for example, the German Democratic Republic since 1961, to adopt severely restrictive emigration policies. Still other socialist countries, e.g. Yugoslavia, Poland, 1956-81 and post-1956 Hungary have had no important restrictions on either exit or return for the vast majority of citizens.

Because throughout its history the US has had sufficient resources and wage levels high enough to attract many more immigrants than those desiring to emigrate, its exit restrictions have been limited only in so far as to deny travel in and out of the country to those who might undermine the legitimacy of its institutions. During the American Revolution, for example, those who wished to cross into British territory had to obtain a pass from the various State governments or military commanders. Generally a pass was granted only to individuals of known and acceptable 'character and views' and after their promise neither to inform or otherwise to act to the prejudice of the United States. Passes, even for those whose loyalty was guaranteed, were generally difficult to acquire; for example, General Washington was reluctant to grant passes into British controlled areas except 'on very important and necessary occasions'.<sup>22</sup>

Although it began to issue passports in 1796, the new federal government did not require individuals wishing to leave the country to obtain one; these early US passports served as documents of identification and introduction for persons travelling in foreign countries, and were not exit permits – as they became later. Not until World War I did the Congress make it unlawful to leave the US without a valid passport, but in the 1920s and 1930s passports again became optional. In 1941, once more as a war measure, passports were required as a condition of exit from the US. After the Second World War the US maintained its authority to forbid individuals to travel abroad if, it was thought, this might not be 'in the best interests of the United States'. From 1947 to the mid-1950s numerous individuals were denied the right to leave the US on the grounds of their leftist political associations or beliefs, while blanket prohibitions were applied to travel to certain socialist countries. The US State Department's policy of denying exit from the country to those whose overseas activities might not be in the 'best



interests of the United States' was incorporated into the 1950 McCarran Act, which forbade the issue of passports to members of the Communist Party, and the 1954 Internal Security Act, which gave the Secretary of State discretionary powers to refuse to issue an individual a passport. At this time, individuals who left the US without a valid passport (even to go to Mexico or Canada) were subject to criminal penalties on their return. As the Cold War diminished in the late 1950s the Secretary of State's discretionary powers withered away. However, restrictions remained on travel to some countries, for political reasons (for example, Cuba, China, Vietnam, Albania) throughout the mid-1970s, and Iran in 1980, and were reinforced by the threat of criminal action. In 1981, the Reagan administration once again restricted travel to certain countries – for example, to Cuba and Vietnam.

Unlike 20th Century Europe – a region of *emigration* until the present century – the US's main concern has been to regulate *immigration*. Beginning with restrictions and then absolute prohibitions on immigrants from Asia, in the last two decades of the 20th Century, US immigration restrictions became increasingly severe until the 1924 Immigration Act, which prohibited virtually all immigration for any reason whatsoever from most countries of the world, with the exception of North-Western Europe, with its highly skilled, educated and politically reliable populations. Ample reserves of displaced peasants were now available in the Southern US States, Puerto Rico and Mexico meant it was no longer necessary to absorb the surplus peasantries of Eastern and Southern Europe. In fact, had European immigrants been permitted to continue to enter the US, the rapid commercialization of agriculture in the US South would have resulted in a massive redundant labour pool in the Northern US industrial cities. Further, after the First World War many European immigrants had associations with leftist groups in Europe – unlike the US South, or even Puerto Rico and Mexico migrants. The prohibition on European immigration thus served as a politically stabilising factor in the US.

Meanwhile, North-Western Europe's rapid industrialization created a labour shortage there. In some places this was dealt with by a reinstitution of emigration restrictions in the inter-war years, and increasingly (especially in the 1950s and 1960s) by the immigration of workers from North-Western Europe's periphery. In the post-War period Europe, in common with the US, became primarily concerned with regulating immigration rather than emigration – especially in the 1970s and 1980s as its economies began to stagnate and the supply of immigrants began to exceed the demand.

In 1965 the US immigration law was changed to allow immigration from any country, with priority given to those with skills needed by the economy. This new law produced a 'brain drain' of educated professionals from India, South Korea and Hong Kong, as well as from Latin America and Europe. Many highly educated individuals took up residence in the US in order to benefit from high incomes, rather than work for lower financial rewards in their own countries, where, in most cases, their services would have made a



valuable contribution to the lives of the common people.

Another priority of US immigration law has been to grant the right of immigration to those (usually upper-and upper middle-class persons) who leave such socialist countries (as the USSR, Poland, Vietnam, Hungary and Cuba, both as a gesture of support for those whose political views accord with the US's, and as part of its international propaganda war against 'totalitarian socialism' and for 'human rights'.

The law is worded in terms of granting refugee status to those who leave their countries for reasons of political persecution, but the US has systematically determined that virtually anyone who leaves a socialist country does so for reasons of political persecution (in spite of the well established fact that in most socialist countries in the 1970s and 1980s there has been relatively little political persecution).<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, refugees who oppose murderous right-wing regimes operating in their country – regimes such as those in Guatemala, El Salvador and Haiti that protect US business interests and in turn are supported by the US state – are routinely denied refugee status. For the US to acknowledge that their lives would probably be endangered if they were forcibly repatriated, would be an admission of support for countries that disregard basic human rights – in contradiction to one of the major ideological premises justifying US foreign policy.

It should be noted that the right of Western Europeans (and Poles) to emigrate, and of those individuals with highly saleable skills and 'correct' politics from the less developed countries, is *de facto* substantially greater than the right of peasants, workers and the urban unemployed in the less developed countries, even when formal emigration restrictions are the same. If China, India or Haiti allows its citizens to emigrate and Australia, Canada, Japan, the US, the UK and Western Europe (and virtually all other high wage areas) are closed to immigrants from those areas (unless a high level of needed skill or special political assets can be demonstrated) then their emigration policies are irrelevant.

The brief overview of the history of exit restrictions clearly demonstrates that a state's restrictions on emigration have always been a product of the general economic, military and ideological welfare of a society as assessed by its ruling class, and that virtually all states, almost throughout history, have put serious difficulties in the way of those members of their populations who wished to leave their territory. There are substantial reasons why 'the right to emigrate', together with the right to publicly express political ideas contrary to official ideology have historically been the two most generally restricted 'rights'; both directly affect the common economic health and ideological security. Labour – the source of all wealth – is a vital national resource. If a substantial portion of a country's population, or a substantial proportion of those with specific vital skills, were to leave a country, its overall economic situation would be substantially weakened. Since the purpose of any state is to advance the welfare of that class which controls the wealth of the country, it thus follows logically that no state will allow the exit of any substantial portion of its population, unless the economic and



political costs of maintaining it within the national boundaries exceed the costs of allowing it to leave.

The contemporary elevation of the 'freedom to emigrate' to the status of one of the most important 'inalienable human rights' is largely a product of liberal capitalist ideology, which directly reflects the underlying interests of advanced capitalism and imperialism rather than the interests of working people of the world (as is alleged by the discourse of abstract human rights). In the real world most emigrés are economic refugees leaving their homelands because of inadequate economic opportunities who have the intention of returning after they 'have made their fortunes'. The right to a good job in their native country is obviously more important to them than the 'right' to leave their homeland in search of a job overseas.

Emigrés who do not leave their countries out of economic desperation do so owing to persecution on grounds of their ethnicity, nationality, or religious or political activities. It is reasonable to assume that emigrés would normally prefer the right to be protected from discrimination, the right to peacefully practice their religion, and to attempt to achieve their political goals, rather than the 'right of emigration'. In the real world, the celebration of the right to emigrate typically camouflages the struggle between the rights of capital to obtain a labour force or secure domestic ideological homogeneity (and to score ideological points against socialist societies) and the right of working people to a decent standard of living, as well as a basic guarantee of a life free from structural humiliations.

The institutionalization of the right to overseas travel and immigration and their associated general liberal ideology of 'freedom' is more firmly established in Dutch, British and American culture than elsewhere because of these countries' particular economic history. The fact that Britain was the first country to undergo capitalist industrialization meant that it was among the first to eliminate emigration restrictions, because it was the first to produce a massive surplus population of ex-peasants which became too economically and politically costly to maintain at home. As a result, emigration restrictions were not only considerably relaxed in the 18th Century, and abolished altogether in the early 19th, but emigration was strongly encouraged — even forced in the case of penal colonies such as Georgia and Australia — in order to ensure a labour force for the British colonies.

Across the Atlantic, the US — as the primary recipient of most of Europe's emigrants throughout the World War I period, able to attract sufficient labour power without the need to restrict emigration — had every reason to celebrate the 'inalienable right of people to leave their countries', since such discourse was convenient propaganda with which to encourage the older states of Europe and China to release their labour reserve to be utilized by rapidly accumulating US capital. In these latter years of the 20th Century, the US continues to be the world's chief practitioner of the rhetoric of the 'inalienable right to emigrate', since such rhetoric continues to serve it in the appropriation of the highly skilled labour of the less developed world, and simultaneously enables it continuously to score a propaganda victory over



the poorer socialist countries. Countries that are attempting to institutionalize egalitarian wage policies, and carry out rapid industrialization must deter their more highly skilled workers from emigrating and succumbing to the temptation of the high salaries and luxurious living styles attainable in the US. By asserting that among the most fundamental of all 'human rights' issues is to be permitted to leave one's country, US propaganda categorizes socialist countries' restrictions on emigration as proof of the superiority of inequalitarian capitalism over 'totalitarian' socialism.

In reality, emigration restrictions are irrelevant to the inherent possibilities of abstract freedom in capitalist and socialist societies, but reflect only the particular circumstances of the latter half of the 20th Century in which most of the highly industrialized countries of the world are capitalist and able to offer its workforce generous financial rewards — especially to the highly skilled. Faced with the emigration of a significant part of the labour force, doubtless the Western capitalist countries would take similar action to that of their predecessor states and other states throughout history and impose exit restrictions on their nationals.

The relative liberalism of the world's leading capitalist states towards the international mobility of their nationals that has prevailed since the mid-19th Century, has to a large extent been associated with the general liberalism of this period: free trade, free labour (the abolition of slavery, serfdom and the rights of craftworkers in their jobs), and the freedom of public expression. All these 'rights' have proved to be highly beneficial to the most rich and powerful countries — first Holland, then Britain, then the US, then the rest of Western Europe — and it is for this reason these countries have instituted and celebrated such 'rights' and other countries have not. Under such circumstances 'freedom' is not simply permitted but often enforced. Thus, Britain, the US and other Western powers *forced* free trade, free emigration, freedom of ideology (i.e. the rights of missionaries to convert), and 'free' labour, upon most of the less developed world. This imperialist discourse of 'inalienable rights', however, has concealed the most crass material interests of expanding capitalism, and the destruction and humiliation of the less developed countries, including the premature deaths of many millions of their people.

In the late 20th Century the discourse of 'human rights' similarly disguises the interests of those who materially benefit from the emigration of skilled persons from socialist societies. Indeed, this illustrates the general principle that the discourse of 'inalienable' absolute individual or 'inherent human rights' is merely an ideological cloak overlying the class interests of those who employ it.

The 'community' (i.e. propertied class) interest always prevails, and is the real basis of all 'rights' (the rhetoric of social contract or inalienable individual rights notwithstanding). The conceptualization of individual rights as sometimes overridden by the community interest (which reflects an individual vs. society dualism) is fundamentally faulty. It is sufficient to understand the logic of a particular type of society and its level of wealth



and stability to know what individual 'rights' will be permitted and celebrated; no other hypotheses are necessary.

## **Comparative Analysis**

It can be argued legitimately that for purposes of illustrating the condition of rights in the contemporary Soviet Union comparisons would most appropriately be made: (1) with the country's Czarist (pre-1917) past as well as with previous periods in Soviet history, focusing on the rate of change in the advance or regression of rights; (2) with countries at a similar level of the development of the productive forces, either today or at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution; or, (3) with the other major economic and military power and chief representative of the major competing social and economic system in the world today – the USA.

For those sympathetic to Soviet achievements in the area of rights it would be desirable to assume the first framework. It can easily be demonstrated that the vast majority of the Soviet people have experienced a significant improvement in all types of rights: (1) basic civil liberties and participatory rights: before 1917 the Russian Empire was a Monarchist absolutism in which no effective participation or civil liberties to oppose the system or to advocate the interests of the working people or minorities were allowed; (2) civil rights: a policy of forced Russification existed as well as a policy of systematic persecution of the Jews; (3) productive property was concentrated in the hands of a few, with most of the urban population being propertyless, workers having no rights in their jobs; and finally, (4) in terms of distributive rights, there was no right to work, housing, education, medicine, social security, etc. for the common people. Similarly, comparisons of conditions in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s with those in the mid-1930s to mid-1955s can (by the consensus of Western scholars) easily demonstrate considerable expansion in the area of popular rights, especially civil liberties and participatory rights. My analysis will refer to the Soviet past, but this will not be the primary mode of comparison.

That there is an advanced level of rights in the USSR today in comparison with countries with an equivalent level of economic development and living standard of the common people in the Russian Empire in 1917 is also easily demonstrable. The situation in Soviet Central Asia in all five areas (including civil liberties) are considerably more advanced than in those areas across the Soviet Union's southern borders, which traditionally shared the same cultures, for example, Turkey, Iran under the Shah, Afghanistan before its 1978 revolution, as well as such countries as Pakistan. Similarly the popular rights experienced today in the Slavic and the Baltic and Transcaucasian Republics in comparison with countries such as Argentina, Portugal and Chile, which roughly, were at similar levels of the development of their productive forces in 1917 reflects favourably on the Soviet Union. To a large extent such comparisons form a peripheral strand of my argument, especially in



reference to conditions in Soviet Central Asia.

A somewhat more difficult case for a supporter of the thesis that rights are fairly advanced in the Soviet Union would be to contrast the degree of rights in the Soviet Union with countries which today are on a similar level of development of the productive forces, and hence living standards of the people, for example, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom. While a strong case could be made (at least for the UK and Italy) that there is a higher level of type III civil liberties in the West, it would be more difficult to demonstrate that civil rights for minorities, substantive economic rights, property rights for the majority, or participatory rights were more advanced in capitalist countries. Comparisons between Italy, Spain, the UK and the USSR are made occasionally in this book.

That rights in the USSR are more advanced in comparison with its chief competitor in the world today – the USA ‘the land of the free’ – is perhaps most difficult of all assertions to maintain. To do so might prove to be the strongest case against those who categorize the competition between the socialist system (as typified by the USSR) and the capitalist system (as typified by the USA) in terms of ‘human rights’ rather than in terms of living standards.

In the comparisons between the US and the USSR every effort is made to locate more or less comparable data for the same or comparable time periods. Thus the history of repression and tolerance in the two countries is taken from the time of their respective revolutions through to about 1980. Comparisons of the conditions of minorities and women in the two countries focuses on the 1960–80 period. Whenever possible, the most recently available Soviet data is compared with data from the US for the same years – or for years as close as possible. In some cases, however, data for the Soviet Union is available in English for only selected time periods, usually because it was reported in a specific study (sometimes done in the mid- or late 1960s) and is not regularly updated in any available English language source. Data for the US is sometimes available for its census years only, or in a few cases, solely in special reports which cover only selected years. When it is impossible to locate data for the same (or approximately the same) year for the two countries, *earlier* Soviet data is compared with later US data. Such a comparison has a built-in pro-US bias since this gives the US longer to have improved the conditions of minorities or women, than the Soviets. Since such comparisons are inherently biased against demonstrating that the Soviets have made more progress than the US, contrary evidence in such comparisons is strongly indicative that the USSR is more progressive on questions of minority or women’s rights than the US. Comparisons for the US and the USSR on economic conditions and rights are made largely from the most recently available 1970s data, which, for the most part, are for comparable time periods.

In comparing and contrasting the conditions of rights in the Soviet Union and the United States of America this book will focus only on three and a



half of the basic types of rights outlined in this chapter: (1) civil rights (the position of national minorities and women); (2) distributive rights; (3) civil liberties; and (4) property rights of working people in relation to job security, workers' participation and other job rights. The question of participation in the state (political rights) and other aspects of property rights were treated in one of my earlier books.<sup>24</sup> These latter two questions are *the* two central aspects of which class has power in the USSR, i.e., whether or not the country is socialist, while the former questions, though not an integral part of socialism, are nevertheless closely linked to it. It is to be expected that an authentically socialist society would create an advanced structure of civil rights for national minorities and women, and that the rights of these groups would be considerably more advanced than under comparable capitalist societies; that the basic social security and job rights (including participation in management) for working people should be considerably more advanced than in capitalist societies; that working people should exercise real civil liberties in participation in public discussions on the development of their society (although not necessarily in publicly expressing anti-socialist ideas); and that working people should enjoy an advanced level of social services as well as the guarantee of the right to work.

Chapter two examines the position of the major Asian minorities vis-à-vis the extent to which they have maintained a colonial or neo-colonial relationship with the European parts of the USSR. Their economic development, social welfare, education, cultural and linguistic development and political participation are examined, as is the evidence for separatism, anti-socialist or anti-Russian sentiments and movements. Chapter three is a parallel study of the major European nationalities and of the Jews, and concludes that there is little or no semblance of national oppression in the USSR. That considerable advances have been made in virtually all aspects of the life of the minorities, and that little of the previous inferior status of the oppressed nationalities of the USSR remains. The comparison with the USA shows that there is considerably more substantial and rapid progress in these regards in the USSR.

Chapter four is a systematic analysis of the position of women in the USSR. The legal rights of women, the socialization of child care, the sharing of housework by husbands and wives, the readily availability of abortion, the educational opportunities open to women, the economic integration of women in the economy, the special protections for women workers and the role of women in management, the Party and in the government are closely examined. It is concluded that women have achieved a considerably more egalitarian position in Soviet society than have US women, even though, in 1917, US women were in a considerably better position relative to men: progress for Soviet women has thus been extremely rapid.

Chapter five covers the question of distributive rights as well as job rights, including participation in the decision making processes of the enterprises. The standard of living of Soviet and Western workers is compared (in terms of necessities, luxuries, housing, etc.). The rights to free education and medical



care, as well as retirement and disability benefits are treated. The considerable rights to remunerative employment, job security and participation of Soviet workers is elaborated and contrasted with the rights of US workers. Most areas of distributive and job rights (safety conditions being one exception) are found to be significantly more advanced in the USSR than in the US.

Chapters six, seven and eight systematically examine civil liberties (especially type III advocacy rights) in the USSR and the USA. Chapter seven traces the history of advocacy and due process rights (and their repression or suspension) from the 1917 revolution to the mid-1950s. The period of cultural revolution (1928-31), and of collectivization of agriculture/famine (1928-33), as well as the period of the so-called 'Great Purge' (1936-38) are concentrated upon, as it is in these periods that 'human rights' are most commonly alleged to have been the most repressed in Soviet history. In this chapter it will be shown that the considerable variations in the level of due process and advocacy rights from 1917 to 1955 were a product of the degree of international and domestic crisis, and not a product of individual personalities. Chapter eight focuses on the contemporary Soviet dissident movement, first defining the range of tolerated public opinion in the country, the extent of and definitions of 'dissidents', their strategy, the sanctions against them, and the different political currents among them. The level of tolerance and repression of those who oppose the Soviet socialist system is carefully compared with the history of repression of those who have opposed the dominant institutions of US society over the 200 years of US history, and concludes that there is no qualitative difference between the two types of societies in this respect. The states of both the USSR and the USA have always done whatever was necessary to preserve their dominant system of property. Periods of increased repression in both countries have corresponded to the degree of the threat to the dominant class, while periods of tolerance have corresponded to periods of latency of opposition movements. As is shown in Chapter six, the difference between the repression practised in US history during times of crisis and war and that which has been practised since the mid-1950s in the USSR, while it does not differ in essence or extent, does differ in the dimension of 'who benefits', as one would expect from the qualitatively different class nature of the two countries. Finally, Chapter nine is a summary of the data presented, and outlines a general theory of advocacy rights.

It must be emphasized that the analysis in Chapters six to nine, on tolerance and civil liberties, is a materialist attempt to explain the causes of tolerance and repression in a given society at a given time and not an attempt to evaluate repression or tolerance as 'bad' or 'good'. The underlying assumption here is that a scientific understanding of why repression or tolerance occurs is more useful than are the all-too-easy value judgements (which fill many library shelves). Armed with an understanding of the causes of repression and tolerance we may be able not only to objectively evaluate the relative liberation potential of capitalism and socialism, but also act in such a way as to avoid misplaced repression or liberalism in the future.



It must also be emphasized that the attempt to explain the causes of the more repressive periods of either US or Soviet history in no way 'justifies' or 'legitimizes' such repressions. On the contrary, a scientific understanding of such repressive periods in both countries avoids trivializing them either as simply 'mistakes', or a result of the policies of 'bad' leaders. Again, with an understanding of the structural causes of tolerance and repression we are in a better position to objectively evaluate and explain to others the relative potential of capitalism and socialism to realize 'human rights', as well as to minimize the probability of future mistaken liberalism or repression.

## **A Note on Sources**

The discussion of human rights in the USSR and the USA is based almost entirely on fundamentally anti-Soviet, pro-capitalist sources; sources generally considered in Western academic circles to be respectable and objective. Pro-Soviet sources, as a general rule, are not used (with the exception of a few statistics from the Soviet statistical year-book and citations from the Soviet Constitution). The generally anti-Soviet sources utilized almost exclusively in this book can be expected to be biased in the direction of exaggerating the extent of the absence of human rights in the USSR, while at the same time magnifying the West's achievements in this respect. For the most part, these sources can also be expected to approach the study of the USSR within a philosophical framework, or problematic, of rights native to the Western liberal tradition. A framework which emphasizes formal universal and abstract civil liberties and minimizes the emphasis both on substantive rights and the class nature of all rights. Because of their anticipated bias, such works can generally be considered exceptionally reliable when they include evidence for the existence of a high level of rights, especially civil liberties, in the USSR. Since any claims made in pro-Soviet sources can be easily discredited as mere propaganda (and can, in fact, be expected generally to exaggerate the level of rights in the USSR, and play down any failings in Soviet rights) these are not relied upon.

An examination of the substantial body of scholarly work produced on most aspects of Soviet society since the 1960s in the Anglo-Saxon countries reveals an interesting pattern. The polemic cold war rhetoric that permeated the works of the 'Sovietologists' in the 1950s has largely been replaced by fairly careful and balanced discussions of whatever particular area of Soviet life a writer is covering (such is the case even in official US government publications such as the US International Communications Agency's *Problems of Communism*). However, the introductions and conclusions of such works (and usually the introductions and conclusions of each chapter as well) sandwich such valuable empirical discussions between generally anti-Soviet and pro-Western analyses, which for the most part are not based on the evidence the writers present. Rather, the generalities, in contrast to the specifics, of such works, seem to be an assertion of 'common sense',



'what we all know', or the assumptions of the field; or perhaps more cynically, what must be said in order to get the works published and to maintain academic respectability (as well as future funding). There seems to be a sincere ambivalence towards the Soviet Union at the heart of contemporary Soviet studies. The USSR's considerable accomplishments are now generally recognized by most careful Western students of that society, but very few draw the general, logical conclusions from the corpus of their work, instead preferring the privileges traditional to the practitioners of their field. The present author is deeply indebted to the integrity of their detailed scholarship, but being less cautious, draws the conclusions lying just below the surface of the corpus of their work.

## References

1. In times of revolution, civil war or other major crisis, all societies have found it necessary to restrict such due process rights in the interest of order, mobilization for war or social transformation. In the 20th Century, restrictions in these areas have been more common both in socialist and capitalist societies than restrictions classified as level I liberties. At the same time in both socialist and capitalist societies they have been much less common (or consistently applied) than have restrictions on level III liberties.
2. Karl Marx put forward this argument in his analysis of the French Constitution of 1848 which attempted *both* to guarantee the universal franchise *and* private property in the means of production: 'The comprehensive contradiction of this constitution, however, consists in the following: the classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate, proletariat, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, it puts in possession of political power through universal suffrage. And from the class whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws the political guarantees of this power. It forces the political rule of the bourgeoisie into democratic conditions, which at every moment help the hostile classes to victory and jeopardize the very foundations of bourgeois society.' *Class Struggles in France 1848-1850*, Karl Marx, 1850, p. 172.
3. V.I. Lenin (1917B), Vol. III, p. 371.
4. V.I. Lenin (1919), Vol. III, p. 165.
5. F. Engels, 1894, pp. 249-50, 251.
6. K. Marx and F. Engels, 1849, pp. 38-9.
7. F. Engels, 1894, p. 251.
8. V.I. Lenin, 1921B, Vol. III, p. 654.
9. V.I. Lenin, 1905, Vol. I, p. 516.
10. Discussion in this section is based largely on the following sources: Doman 1957; Fleming 1952; Gabin 1959; Glass 1967; Goodman 1966; Hansen 1940; Isaac 1947; Mehl and Rappaport 1978; Parker 1957; Turack 1970; Zo 1978, and Zolberg 1978.
11. Zolberg, 1978, p. 246.
12. Zolberg, 1978, pp. 262-3.



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13. See Ingles, 1964, p. 3.
14. Turak, 1970, p. 294.
15. Ibid., p. 295.
16. Zolberg, 1978.
17. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 272.
18. Doman, 1957, p. 310.
19. Cited in Zo, p. 29.
20. Ibid., p. 31.
21. Mehr and Rappaport, 1978.
22. Goodman, 1966.
23. See US Department of State, 1981.
24. Szymanski, 1979.



## 2. The Asian Nationalities in the USSR

While Great Britain, France and the other Western European imperialist powers were conquering most of the Caribbean, Africa, India, South-East Asia and the Pacific, Russia was expanding overland towards the Pacific and deep into Central Asia. By the late 19th Century Russia had conquered and secured as colonies a considerable section of Asia including the Transcaucasus, Kazakhstan and Turkestan. With the upheavals of the 1917 revolution and the consequent civil war much of this area became temporarily independent under rightist governments. By the early 1920s, however, all of this area again became associated with Russia in the USSR. There was a period of guerrilla type resistance by some conservative sections of the population (the 'Basmachi') for a few years in the early 1920s with the local population divided between progressives supporting socialist transformation and conservatives resisting it.

Under the Czar, and at the beginning of Soviet rule, the societies of Central Asia and the Islamic parts of the Transcaucasus were more or less identical to those in the adjacent areas: parts of the Ottoman or Persian empires, Afghanistan or British India. Their administration differed in no significant way from the colonies and dependencies of Britain, France or the other Western European powers. They were economically exploited for the benefit of the Russian ruling class and kept undeveloped as sources of raw materials and markets. Their populations were impoverished and denied basic welfare services and education, their native languages and cultures were discouraged and they were denied self-government.

It is important to examine the relationship between the Asiatic areas of the Soviet Union, and the present day Slavic areas of the USSR in order to assess the extent to which the pre-1917 colonial relations between a European colonial power and its Asiatic colonies have been either maintained or transformed during 60 years of Soviet rule. If the Slavic areas of the USSR, particularly Russia, are essentially imperialist, then we would expect the relationship between them and the Asiatic areas to be fundamentally the same as that between the US — as well as other leading capitalist countries — and their colonies and semi-colonies throughout the less developed areas. If, on the other hand, the characteristics of a colonial or neo-colonial relationship are absent, this would lend considerable evidence



to the thesis that Russia, and the rest of the Slavic areas, are not imperialist.

For the purposes of this book, Azerbaidzhan (in the Transcaucus) and the five Republics in the central part of Asia: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizistan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, are categorized as Soviet Asia. (The latter four are commonly referred to as 'Soviet Central Asia', but I use the term to include Kazakhstan as well.) In order to determine whether or not the relationships between Soviet Asia and Russia are characteristically colonial or neo-colonial, an examination will be made of: economic relations, living standards, including health and education, the development of local language and culture, the degree of self-government and manifestations of nationalism, pan-Islamic sentiments and separatism or anti-Sovietism in Soviet Asia. If there is a strong colonial or neo-colonial character in Russia's relations with Soviet Asia it is to be expected that this will be manifested by exploitation, hindrance of its industrialization, maintenance of low living standards, perpetuation of poor welfare and educational standards, general discrimination against Soviet Asians for good jobs, education and government positions, and discouragement of the use and development of native languages and culture. Further, that such colonial and neo-colonial oppression would result in resentment and resistance by the native populations towards Russian domination and oppression and consequently that riots, Islamic revivalism, hostility to Russians, and dissident movements among intellectuals would arise.

## **Origins of Soviet Power in Central Asia**

The Bolshevik revolution resonated through Central Asia. Younger Asian intellectuals especially rallied behind the Bolshevik cause in the Civil War against the traditional ruling classes of Central Asia, and in the transformation of the region after 1920. Before the 1917 Revolution there were both strong progressive nationalist and national Communist movements among the Asians. In the decade before 1917, Central Asian nationalists had been moving towards Marxism in reaction to their failure to gain concessions from the Czar. National Marxism thrived in Baku and Kazakhstan. The Bolshevik emphasis on the 'national question' and their sensitivity to the concerns of colonized peoples were well received among the colonized Asians as were the efforts of the Bolsheviks to recruit members. A distinctive 'Muslim National Communism' developed, the predecessor of similar latter day developments in China, Cuba, and elsewhere in the less developed countries. Many Asian leaders of this movement at first proposed autonomy from the Russian dominated CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and emphasized separate political and cultural development within a federation with European Russia.<sup>1</sup>

In June 1918 a separate Muslim Bolshevik Party was created out of the former Socialist Muslim Party. This Party claimed equal status with the Russian Communist Party. Party membership was limited exclusively to



persons of Muslim background. In the immediate post-1917 years the Bolshevik parties were joined by a wide variety of radicals, socialists and nationalists who supported the Bolsheviks against their common enemies. By 1920 the Bolsheviks seemed to have gained hegemony among radical intellectuals of Islamic backgrounds, including such non-Marxist nationalist groupings as the Young Bukharans. In some places whole clans and tribes joined. There were relatively few workers in the Muslim Bolshevik Party, with the principle exception of the Baku area, simply because there were few workers in the region; the class background of the new Party was heavily middle class, especially among nationalist intellectuals. Within a few years after its formation the autonomous Muslim Bolshevik Party was merged into the CPSU.<sup>2</sup>

Muslim troops played a decisive role in the defeat of the counter-revolutionary White armies in the Russian Civil War as well as in establishing Soviet power in Central Asia. In July 1918, about 50,000 Tatar-Bashkir soldiers were fighting with the Sixth Red Army in the East. Early in 1919, approximately a quarter of a million soldiers of Muslim background were fighting with the Red Armies on all fronts. At the beginning of the Civil War the White counter-revolutionary forces were able to recruit, or more usually draft, considerable numbers of Muslims into their armies. However, as the War progressed more and more of these troops defected, typically as whole units, to the Reds. Defecting units often played a positive role in Bolshevik military victories, for example, 2,000 trained Bashkir troops who defected in 1919 on the Urals front made a crucial contribution to Kolchaks defeat. Coincidental with the defection of troops was the desertion of various non-Marxist Asian nationalist groups to the side of the Reds as they came to see what a White restoration would mean for Central Asia. By 1920 the Bolsheviks had secured the support, or at least the neutrality, of almost all radical nationalists in Central Asia.<sup>3</sup>

The Bolshevik Revolution was first carried into Central Asia by Slavic workers who organized the Tashkent Soviet (composed entirely of Slavs) which took power in Tashkent at the end of October 1917. By allying with the progressive nationalist Young Bukharans the Tashkent Soviet set the pattern throughout Central Asia. In March 1918 the Tashkent Soviet sent a detachment of Russian workers with a larger group of Young Bokharans to overthrow the Emir of Turkestan who had established an independent government in the ancient city of Bukhara; this attempt to overthrow the reactionary Emir was repulsed. Tashkent and its Soviet was cut off from Russia proper by the White armies for more than a year, but with progressive nationalist support it was able to maintain itself until the White encirclement was broken. The policies followed by the Slavic workers who ran the Tashkent Soviet, however, tended to alienate many Asians, and not until Tashkent was again linked up with the mainstream of the Bolshevik Revolution were its policies moderated and its discriminatory measures against Muslims, including excluding them from government posts and the forced appropriation of food from the local population, eliminated. Another separatist



nationalist government in Turkestan, set up in December 1918 in the old city of Kokand, was suppressed by the Tashkent Soviet in February 1919.<sup>4</sup>

The Emir of Bukhara, who had been ruling this city and its environs since 1917 in an attempt to consolidate his regime, launched a reign of terror against all progressives, including the nationalist Young Bukharans. He also established relations with the British forces in Persia and other anti-Socialist forces abroad. In September 1920, the Young Bukharans organized a revolt in Bukhara and, aided by the Red Army, finally succeeded in overthrowing the Emir and establishing the People's Republic of Bukhara. Similar events occurred at the same time in Khiva, the other principal Khanate of Central Asia.<sup>5</sup>

The new Soviet regimes in Central Asia began a campaign of intensive reform that included radical land redistribution; in Turkestan, large stretches of land seized by Russian settlers were returned to Muslim peasants.<sup>6</sup> Intensive campaigns were launched against what were considered to be backward aspects of Islam, such as the cloistering and veiling of women (see Chapter 4) and the Ramadan fast. Such campaigns were combined with a wide range of economic, social and cultural improvements in people's lives, including mass literacy campaigns, universal education, modernization of agriculture, industrialization, and the provision of basic medical and welfare services. Within a relatively short time most of the population was consolidated behind Soviet power.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1920-24 period, differences appeared between the non-Marxists, who initially formed the dominant force in the new People's Republics of Khiva and Bukhara, in most of the territory of the old Czarist colony of Turkestan; the Central Asian National Communists, who aspired to create one large 'Republic of Turan' which would unite all Islamic and Turkic peoples in the old Russian empire into one Soviet Republic to be loosely affiliated with the European Socialist area; and the Moscow centred Bolsheviks. The Central Asian national Communists wanted to use the Republic of Turan in aid of the Bolshevik's policy of extending the Revolution into Asia. One Tatar leader of this persuasion argued:

To attract the Muslim proletariat to communism we must offer him a national flag, which will act on him as a magnet. . . . If we want to sponsor the revolution in the East, we must create in Soviet Russia a territory close to the Muslim East, which could become an experimental laboratory for the building of communism, where the best revolutionary forces can be concentrated.<sup>8</sup>

By 1923-24 Marxist forces had succeeded in displacing non-Marxist elements in the progressive nationalist movements in the People's Republics of Khiva and Bukhara. In 1924 the high degree of autonomy in these two republics ended, and the idea of a unified Republic of Turan was officially rejected. Instead, Central Asia was divided into five Soviet Republics according to traditional ethnic/linguistic lines; separate republics were



established for the Uzbeks, Takzhiks, Turkmen, Kirgiz and Kazakhs. It was argued that only by such means would traditional antagonisms among various ethnic groups (such as that between the sedentary Uzbeks and the nomadic Turkmen) be minimized and the progressive aspects of each group's culture be developed.<sup>9</sup>

In 1918, the Tashkent Soviet's policies towards the native Asians, particularly campaigns to requisition food, drove many of them to rebel, especially those in the more remote areas where traditional religious and political figures remained influential. Initially, many Asians joined with the White armies and later continued their resistance as guerrillas – the Basmachi. In autumn 1919, after the central government had re-established control over the Tashkent Soviet and Muslims were incorporated into it, a more intensive campaign to suppress guerrilla resistance to Soviet power was instituted, under General Frunze. By autumn 1922, the Bolsheviks (both Slavic and Asian) working with the Young Bukharans were able to put down the bulk of traditionalist Basmachi resistance, and although until 1931 scattered resistance continued in some areas, by 1923 violent resistance became almost negligible.<sup>10</sup>

Armed resistance to Soviet Power was revitalized on a smaller scale in some areas in response to the rapid collectivization campaigns after 1928. Resistance to collectivization was especially strong among the largely nomadic Kazakhs and Kirgiz who were forced to abandon their nomadic lifestyle.<sup>11</sup>

## **Economic Development**

Soviet Asia, formerly extremely poor and industrially underdeveloped, was rapidly industrialized and the standard of living brought up to Southern European standards, in sharp contrast to the equivalent areas of the Middle East. The per capita income, in relative terms, in 1970 ranged from Tadzhikistan at 673 roubles per capita (44% below the national average) to Estonia at 1,587 roubles per capita (33% above the national average). See Table 2.1.

The per capita variation is largely owing to the much higher percentage of children among the Asian nationalities than among the European nationalities. When a calculation is made of roubles per adult, which is more relevant as a measure than income per capita in that it more accurately reflects remuneration per worker, we see a smaller spread. The variation between the richest and poorest republics is then reduced to 17% above the USSR average for Estonia and to 21% below for Tadzhikistan; most of the variance is thus seen to be a result of the age structure. Whereas in per capita terms the average for the five Central Asian republics is 32% below the USSR average, measured in terms per adult it is 11% below. While the per capita income for Azerbaidzhan is 38% below the USSR average the income per adult is only 18% below. The data on wages in 1978 reveals an even more



Table 2.1

Produced National Annual Income and Index of Monthly Wages 1978, by Republic

	<i>Roubles per Capita 1970</i>	<i>Roubles per Adult (over 20 years old) 1970</i>	<i>GNP/Capita Equivalent in 1974 US Dollars</i>	<i>Ratio of Average Monthly Wages to the all-Soviet Average: 1978</i>
Estonia	1,587	2,254	\$ 3,618	1.11
Latvia	1,574	2,204	3,589	1.01
Lithuania	1,336	2,044	3,046	.99
RSFSR	1,332	2,078	3,037	1.05
Ukraine	1,158	1,725	2,640	.91
Belorussia	1,092	1,747	2,490	.88
Kazakhstan	979	1,830	2,332	1.00
Moldavia	969	1,667	2,209	.81
Armenia	923	1,818	2,104	.96
Turkmenia	878	1,923	2,002	1.07
Georgia	871	1,428	1,986	.84
Kirgizia	797	1,634	1,817	.90
Azerbaidzhan	737	1,570	1,680	.86
Uzbekistan	728	1,609	1,660	.92
Tadzhikistan	673	1,514	1,534	.88
<i>USSR average</i>	<i>1,194</i>	<i>1,922</i>	<i>\$ 2,720</i>	<i>1.00</i>

Source: Katz et al., 1975, *The Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalists*, pp. 443-52; Lane, 1982, p. 87.

egalitarian picture. Here it is seen that the average wage level in the Asian Republics is only 7% below the all-Soviet average, while Estonia, the Republic with the highest overall wage, has only 11% higher than average wages.

Translating the Soviet conception of National Produced Income into dollars, gives an average of about US \$1,700 per capita in 1970 (as calculated in 1974 dollars) for the Asian Republics. In comparison, the figure for Turkey is \$630, for Iran \$900, for Spain \$1,950, for Portugal \$1,150 and for Greece \$1,850. Soviet Asia compares very favourably with the equivalent parts of the Middle East, being in fact on a similar economic level to Southern Europe. It should also be noted that the gap in even per capita income of Russia proper and the poorest of the Asian republics is significantly less than that between, say, West Germany (\$5,650) and Italy (\$2,430), and very much less than that between West Germany and the poorest of the Southern European countries, such as Portugal or Greece.

The income gap between the poorest and richest States in the USA in the



1960s approximated the income spread among Soviet Republics in 1970. In 1960 the per capita income of Mississippi, the poorest state, was 46% below the national average, and 35% below in 1970. In 1960, Connecticut, the wealthiest state, had a per capita income of 29% above the national average, in 1970 it was 25%. Puerto Rico's per capita income in 1960 was 25% of that of the Continental US, in 1970 it was 36% and in 1978 28%.<sup>12</sup>

The income spread among the Soviet Republics is thus virtually identical to that of the US States, and is far more egalitarian than the spread between the US mainland and its colony of Puerto Rico, which is frequently cited as an example of the economic benefits of US colonialism. While per capita income in Central Asia averaged two-thirds the national average (as it did in the 1960s in the deep South of the US) in Puerto Rico, per capita income averaged only one-third. Additionally, unlike the operative trends, both among the 50 States of the US and among the 15 Soviet Republics, the income gap between Puerto Rico and the US increased, rather than decreased over the course of the 1970s, as indication of the qualitatively different relationship between that island and the US on the one hand and that between Central Asia and the Slavic areas of the USSR on the other.

A UN Economic Commission for Europe report commented that the disparities in living standards between Central Asia and the Soviet average:

were probably one-fifth to one-fourth lower than the Soviet average [and that] this regional disparity in living standards cannot be regarded as large compared with those found in other countries. There is hardly any European country without regions where per capita income or consumption is one-fifth or more below the national average. . . . The conclusion that average living standards in Central Asia are only one-fifth to one-fourth below those of the Soviet Union as a whole is tantamount to saying that they are on much higher levels than those in the neighboring Asian countries, and that they have improved very considerably in the three decades since the end of the Civil War.<sup>13</sup>

The rapid economic growth and improvement in living standards in Soviet Asia is reflected in the rapid industrialization of the area since the Bolshevik Revolution. In Turkmen SSR from 1913 to 1978 industrial output increased by 74 times (11 times since 1940); In Tadzhik SSR by 138 times (16 times since 1940); in Kirghiz SSR by 333 times (34 times since 1940); by 71 times in Uzbek SSR (15 times since 1940); by 232 times in Kazakh SSR (30 times since 1940) and by 62 times in Azerbaidzhan SSR (11 times since 1940). This compares with an increase of 151 times in the Russian Republic since 1913 (and an increase of 17 times since 1940).<sup>14</sup>

The level of industrialization, as reflected in the proportion of the work force in industry, building and transport, contrasted with agriculture, has not yet reached the Soviet average, but there is considerable movement in this direction. In 1939, in the five Central Asian republics, the proportion of industrial workers in the population was 54% that of the Soviet average, but



Table 2.2

Percentages of Total Working Population Engaged in Different Economic Sectors

	1939		1959	
	<i>Industry Building Transport</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Industry Building Transport</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>
USSR average	30.1	50.1	36.9	39.8
RSFSR	33.9	45.9	43.2	30.4
Uzbekistan	14.3	70.8	21.1	58.9
Kazakhstan	21.7	54.0	33.8	39.1
Azerbaidzhan	23.1	57.5	26.5	49.6
Kirgizia	13.9	70.9	24.9	52.2
Tadzhikistan	10.9	75.3	18.9	62.0
Turkmenia	20.3	59.1	26.7	48.6

Source: Alec Nove and J.A. Newth, 1967, *The Soviet Middle East*, p. 41.

by 1959 it had risen to 68%.<sup>15</sup>

In 1956 13% of Iran's working population was employed in industry, building or transport compared to the average of 25% for the five Central Asian republics and 26.5% for Azerbaidzhan in 1959. The contrast between Soviet Asia and the equivalent regions of the mid-East is also seen in Kwh of electrical energy produced per capita. In 1962 it averaged 754 Kwh per capita in the five Central Asian Republics and 1,995 Kwh per capita in Azerbaidzhan, compared to 121 Kwh per capita in Turkey and 32 Kwh per capita in Iran in 1960.<sup>16</sup>

In both Transcaucasia and Central Asia rural incomes are considerably higher than in Russia and other parts of the European USSR. In 1958, (in cash and kind) they were 1.70 times higher in Central Asia than the USSR average, and in Transcaucasia 1.64 times.<sup>17</sup> The higher incomes and living standards of the rural population in the Asiatic Soviet Union compared to those in the European USSR is largely owing to the long term policies, especially prominent in the 1930s and 1940s, of subsidizing Soviet industrial development and industrial workers' living standards by requiring peasants on collective and state farms to supply the state with such basic foodstuffs as potatoes, wheat, barley, meat, milk and eggs, at very low prices. However, the Asiatic Republics, being semi-tropical, specialized in other products such as cotton, tea, citrus fruits and grapes, which were not required to be supplied at low prices; the higher prices paid for these products stimulated their output.<sup>18</sup> Roy Medvedev, one of the most prominent Soviet dissidents, testifies that with the exception of Moscow, the living standard of people in Azerbaidzhan and Central Asia is higher than in the heart of Russia.



In the US in the 1970s, a smaller proportion of blacks than whites was employed in agriculture (a reversal of the traditional situation) but a significantly higher proportion of those of Mexican origin than whites were so employed: 7% and 4% respectively in 1977. Unlike in the USSR, rural incomes are highest in the more developed parts of the US. In 1970, rural wages in the US South averaged \$8.35 a day compared to \$11.75 in the West and \$9.95 in the North-east; furthermore, ethnic minorities in the US earn less than the dominant ethnic groups, again unlike in the USSR. In 1970 non-white rural workers earned \$8.00 a day compared to \$9.70 for whites.<sup>20</sup>

Average earned income per adult for the five Central Asian republics of the USSR was 11% below the national average in 1970, while average monthly wages were only 5% below in 1978. Though not strictly comparable, this may be considered in the light of the ratio of black to white family income in the US in 1970 of 61%, that is 39% below the national average.<sup>21</sup> While the income gap among the nationalities in the USSR has been closing rapidly over the years and has now reached the point where there is relatively little difference between them, in the US during the 1970s the income gap has increased in favour of white families.

In the Soviet Union, in contrast to the US and other capitalist countries, wage scales are uniform throughout the country (except that supplements are offered above the basic rates in remote areas where economic development is encouraged). Thus workers throughout Central Asia and the Transcaucas are paid at at least the same rate for the same jobs as are workers in Russia proper, i.e. industrial workers of the Asiatic nationalities receive the same pay as Russian workers. According to Nove and Newth, 'There is certainly no evidence of wage discrimination'.<sup>22</sup> Because of the lack of development in the past, however, the Asiatic nationalities are still significantly under-represented in the more skilled and higher paying jobs, and in the industrial working class in general; thus they do not benefit fully from the standard all-Union wage scales. Nevertheless, they are rapidly entering all levels of the industrial occupations, consequently the remaining income disparities are disappearing.<sup>23</sup>

Welfare payments, old age pensions, free education and health care, as well as other social services, are also standard throughout the Soviet Union (unlike in the US where welfare benefits in the poorer States are lower than in the richer States). Such services considerably enhance the living standards of the Asiatic population, although Central Asians receive less per capita in social wage benefits because their populations are more rural than the Soviet average; peasants receive less in social benefits from the state than do workers. However,

the relatively backward areas share, in terms of formal equality, in the social service benefits of the USSR as a whole, and the financial burden appears to fall disproportionately on the more 'advanced' Russians, Ukrainians, etc.<sup>24</sup>



Both the industrialization and the rapid improvement in living standards in Soviet Asia have largely been subsidized by the European USSR. Much of their industrial development, especially before 1955, was financed directly from the Union (rather than the local Republic budgets).<sup>25</sup> Almost all the capital goods imported into Soviet Asia during the period of industrialization were from the European USSR, through allocations from the central plan, in order to develop this region. According to Nove and Newth '... it seems reasonable to conclude that this capital flow, coming in the main from Russia proper, represented a net gain to the republics, after making all allowances for offsetting factors'.<sup>26</sup>

The Asiatic Republics have historically been required to provide a smaller proportion of their revenues to the All Union Budget than was required of the European Republics. Likewise, taxes on enterprises in Soviet Asia provided relatively little to the central budget. Taxes on enterprise profits in Uzbekistan in 1961 for example, were less than half the all-Union average per capita.<sup>27</sup>

By and large, they were permitted to retain a more than average proportion of all-Union revenues raised in their territories, to finance economic and social development. This was a consequence of the fact that investment, educational and health expenditure in these areas were greater, relatively to local resources, than elsewhere in the Soviet Union... it follows from the financial evidence that the Russian connection, membership of a large and more developed polity, greatly facilitated such social and economic progress as was achieved in these areas.<sup>28</sup>

In both the US and the USSR there has been a tendency for regional variations in per capita income to disappear; however, there are qualitative differences in the way this process is being achieved in the two countries. The European USSR, unlike virtually all the advanced capitalist countries, has not experienced an immigration of potential industrial and service workers from poorer regions. In the US an inter-migration has occurred with poor whites and blacks migrating North, as well as migration of Latinos to the US; the United Kingdom has received East and West Indian immigrants, France, Portuguese, Arabs, etc., and Germany, Turks, Italians, etc. The direction of migration within the USSR has, instead, been from the more developed to the less developed regions; this is consequent upon a state policy of heavy investment in the least developed areas, and the subsequent opening up of job opportunities (especially at the more skilled levels) in the least developed regions. In the capitalist world, labour migration of peripheral peoples to the advanced countries and regions is caused by massive unemployment at home and the potentiality of earning considerably higher wages than would otherwise be possible. In the USSR the migration in the opposite direction is motivated by prospects of job promotion and a more favourable climate, and by wage supplements in the case of the more remote areas. In



the capitalist world capital flows to low wage areas in order to minimize costs, but since wages are uniform throughout the USSR minimization of labour cost cannot be a consideration. The differential growth of industry in the less developed regions of the USSR is rather a matter of the state's policy to equalize the level of development throughout the country.

In good measure the Asiatic republic's industrialization has come to be integrated with local resources. For example, the Uzbek republic is the leading producer of tractors for cotton sowing and cleaning equipment, Azerbaidzhan is the leading producer of oil drilling machinery, and Armenia is a centre for non-ferrous metallurgy, being rich in molybdenum and a aluminium as well as more rare metals.<sup>29</sup>

Overall, Soviet economic, as well as social, policies have proved to be quite successful in Soviet Asia. So much so that many Western scholars speculate about the 'subversive effect' such a 'Soviet Showplace' could have on the adjacent Middle Eastern regions as their people become aware of conditions on the other side of the border.

It is virtually universally conceded that economic development has been achieved due to Soviet efforts:

The Soviet Union in the past fifty years had conducted social experiments . . . in raising the standards of its Asian minorities well above those of the neighbours from whom they were virtually indistinguishable in 1917. . . . The gist of the Soviet 'message' is that a developing country can convert itself reasonably rapidly into a developed industrial one precisely as the Soviet Union has done – with minimal dependence on Western capital, little or no abatement of political hostility to the West, without the introduction of a fully-fledged capitalist system, and with concomitant advancement of education and the social services.<sup>30</sup>

The European areas of the Soviet Union have heavily subsidized the rapid economic growth and industrialization of Soviet Asia and the speedily improving living conditions of the Asiatic peoples of these areas. There is no evidence, either in the flow of resources or in the effects on Asian economic conditions, of a colonial or neo-colonial relationship between Russia and the Asian regions of the USSR. Rather the evidence indicates that considerable efforts have been made to modernize this region and bring it up to the economic standards of the European USSR.

## **Welfare**

Before the Bolshevik Revolution very few modern medical services were available in Russia's Asiatic colonies. Standards of sanitation and diet were low, and as a result life expectancy was minimal, and infant mortality high. The Soviet system has radically reduced the death rate and thus increased life expectancy. Statistics by Republic are not available for the period after



the mid-1960s, but the official crude death rate for the five Central Asian Republics was 6.0 per 1,000, and for Azerbaidzhan 7.0 per 1,000, compared to 7.2 for the USSR as a whole. In 1965 the crude death rate in the US was 9.4 for whites and 9.9 for non-whites.<sup>31</sup>

According to Nove and Newth '... there is some evidence to suggest that regional differences in Soviet crude death rates are now ... due principally to differences in age-structure rather than to sanitary or medical conditions. ...'<sup>32</sup> In Turkey, in 1959, the crude death rate in towns was 12.9 per 1,000 and much higher in rural areas;<sup>33</sup> in Iran it was approximately 25 per 1,000.<sup>34</sup> Nove and Newth estimate that the death rates in Turkey and Iran as a whole may well be three times those in Soviet Central Asia.<sup>35</sup> These high death rates – in common with those in Central Asia before the Revolution – are owing primarily to high infant mortality and inferior sanitary conditions. In 1975 the estimated infant mortality rate in Soviet Central Asia, although high by contemporary Western European standards, was 30% of that in Turkey; 38% of Iran's; and 17% of Afghanistan's. The estimated Central Asian infant mortality rate of 46 per 1,000 was roughly equivalent to that of Italy in 1960.<sup>36</sup>

Soviet medical and public health care, combined with improved diet, have brought Central Asia up to Western European standards. There is little difference in per capita expenses for medicine in the Asian and European USSR. For example, in 1959, per capita expenditure was 14.1 roubles in Uzbekistan, 16.5 in Kazakhstan, 17.7 in Georgia and 18.9 in Russia.<sup>37</sup> In 1968, the number of hospital beds per 10,000 in the five Central Asian Republics was 99.8, and in Azerbaidzhan 87.8. This compares to the USSR average of 104.1 per 10,000. In 1971 there were 21 doctors per 10,000 for the five Central Asian Republics and 25 per 10,000 in Azerbaidzhan, compared to an average of 28 per 10,000 in the USSR. The slight differential between the Slavic and Asiatic areas appears to be caused by the fact that the Asian population is considerably younger – and thus healthier – than the European population.

The virtually identical medical care available throughout the USSR, reflected in the number of doctors and hospital beds per capita and expenditure on medical care, is a radical improvement on pre-Socialist conditions. For example, in 1913 the number of hospital beds per capita in the five Asiatic Republics was 2 per 10,000 compared to 15 per 10,000 in Russia proper; most of the beds were reserved for European immigrants and officials, and the ratio of doctors to population was 30 per million, compared to 150 per million in Russia.<sup>38</sup>

The contrast between Soviet Asia and neighbouring areas is particularly revealing. In 1970, Iran had three doctors and 13 hospital beds per 10,000 population; while Turkey had five doctors and 20 hospital beds per 10,000.<sup>39</sup>

The qualitative difference in medical care between Soviet Asia and the equivalent areas of the Middle East should also be stressed. In Iran and Turkey doctors and hospitals are heavily concentrated in the major urban



Table 2.3  
Health Care: 1971

	<i>Doctors per 10,000 Population</i>	<i>Doctors per 10,000 Adults</i>	<i>Hospital Beds per 10,000 Population</i>	<i>Hospital Beds per 10,000 Adults</i>
USSR average	28.3	45.7	104.1	167.6
Georgia	36.8	60.4	88.0	144.3
Latvia	36.2	50.7	116.8	163.5
Estonia	33.8	48.0	113.1	160.6
RSFSR	30.1	47.0	107.2	167.2
Armenia	29.4	57.9	85.3	168.0
Lithuania	28.6	43.8	97.6	149.3
Ukraine	28.3	42.2	102.5	152.7
Belorussia	26.7	42.7	98.5	157.6
Azerbaidzhan	25.1	53.5	—	—
Tatar ASSR	23.5	39.7	109.7	205.1
Kazakhstan	22.9	42.8	100.6	220.5
Turkmenia	21.9	47.9	94.9	163.2
Moldavia	21.5	37.0	98.9	202.7
Kirgizia	21.4	43.9	96.9	214.1
Uzbekistan	21.0	46.4	93.1	209.5
Tadzhikistan	16.5	37.1		

Sources: Katz et al., 1975, *Soviet Social Science Data Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, pp. 443, 458; Mickiewicz, 1973, *Handbook of Soviet Social Science Data*, p. 113.

centres and are primarily available only to those who can pay. In Soviet Asia medical care is available both in the rural and urban areas and is available to all on the basis of need. According to the UN Economic Commission for Europe, medical care in Soviet Asia 'has improved so strikingly in the period of Soviet rule that the relevant comparison is no longer with neighbouring Asian countries, but with the countries of Western Europe'.<sup>40</sup>

the progress of even the most backward part of Central Asia is remarkable; by 1961 even Tadzhikistan had one doctor per 850 inhabitants, with three or four auxiliaries supplementing each doctor, and one hospital bed for every 140 inhabitants. This is a state of things which neighbouring states, and even some European states, may well envy. . .<sup>41</sup>

While the ratio of doctors per adult in the USSR in 1971 was 1:63, in the US in 1970 the ratio per capita among the States was 2:62; New York had



233 doctors per 100,000, and Mississippi 89 per 100,000. In the same year Puerto Rico had 91 doctors per 100,000 population, and 35 hospital beds per 10,000 compared to the mainland average of 150 doctors per 100,000, and the US average of 65 hospital beds per 10,000.<sup>42</sup>

Because of the largely private system of medical care in the US there is a considerable differential in the availability of high quality treatment within any given area – with the poorer ethnic minorities suffering disproportionately. This differential in the standard of health care based on economic factors, combined with inadequate diet, poor sanitary conditions, dangerous jobs and neighbourhoods, and the greater stress associated with manual labour, poverty and racism, produce much higher death rates for most ethnic minorities than for the ethnic majority in the US. In 1977, the death rate of blacks between the ages of 25 and 44 averaged 2.5 times that of whites, i.e. a black in the 25–44 age group had a 2.5 times greater probability of dying in a given year than a white of the same age. Blacks in the 45–54 age group die at a rate 2.0 times greater than whites.<sup>43</sup> In ensuring adequate health for its minorities the USSR is clearly much more effective than is the US.

## **Education**

Before the Bolshevik Revolution, the vast majority of the peoples of Soviet Asia were illiterate. Even in 1926, a decade after the Revolution, only 3.8% of the people in Tadzhikistan, 11.6% of those in Uzbekistan, 14.0% of those in Turkmenistan, and 16.5% of those in Kirgizia were literate; a high proportion of the literates were in fact Russian immigrants. By the end of the 1930s most people throughout the USSR were literate, and by the end of the 1950s literacy was virtually universal (see Table 2.4). The achievement in Soviet Asia was particularly noteworthy among girls and women who, in this largely Islamic area, were traditionally confined to the home.

In Iran, in 1971, 63.1% of the total population and 74.5% of all women were illiterate, and in 1975, in Turkey, the same applied to 39.7% of the total population and 56.9% of women.<sup>44</sup> The contrast between Soviet Asia and regions of the Near East with ethnically similar populations is obvious.

The number of school students in the Asiatic Republics increased after the Revolution. In Russia proper the number of students of all types increased by 3.6 times between 1914–15 and 1978–79, compared to over 2,000 times for Tadzhik SSR, over 200 for Uzbek SSR, over 100 for Kirghiz SSR and 90 times for Turkmen SSR (see Table 2.5).

In 1939 2.2% of Kazakhs, 1.5% of Uzbeks, 1.4% of Turkmens, 1.2% of Tadzhiks and 0.9% of Kirgiz had received a secondary education (at least seven years of schooling) compared to the USSR average of 8.3%. By 1959, however, 24.2% of Turkmens, 20.8% of Uzbeks, 20.1% of Tadzhiks, 19.9%



Table 2.4

Literacy: Percentage of Population Aged 9-49

Territory	Both Sexes		Male		Female	
	1926	1959	1926	1959	1926	1959
Urban and Rural:						
USSR	56.6	98.5	71.5	99.3	42.7	97.8
Azerbaidzhan	28.2	97.3	36.1	98.8	19.2	96.0
Kazakhstan	25.2	96.9	35.4	98.8	14.5	95.1
Kirgizia	16.5	98.0	23.9	99.0	8.4	97.0
Tadzhikistan	3.8	96.2	6.4	98.0	0.9	94.6
Turkmenia	14.0	95.4	18.3	97.7	8.8	93.4
Uzbekistan	11.6	98.1	15.3	99.0	7.3	97.3

Source: Mickiewicz, 1973, *Handbook of Soviet Social Science Data*, p. 139.

Table 2.5

Number of Pupils and Students in the Union Republics (at the beginning of school year; 1,000s)

	Pupils in General Educational Schools of All Types		Ratio of 1914-15 to 1978-79
	1914-15	1978-79	
USSR	9,656	44,711	4.6
RSFSR	5,684	20,739	3.6
Ukrainian SSR	2,607	7,600	2.9
Byelorussian SSR	489	1,575	3.2
Uzbek SSR	18	3,876	21.5
Kazakh SSR	105	3,257	31.0
Georgian SSR	157	975	6.2
Azerbaidzhan	73	1,594	21.8
Lithuanian SSR	118	612	5.2
Moldavian SSR	92	747	8.1
Latvian SSR	172	349	2.0
Kirghiz SSR	7	857	122
Tajik SSR	0.4	999	2,498
Armenian SSR	35	616	17.2
Turkmen SSR	7	698	99.7
Estonian SSR	92	217	2.4

Source: *USSR in Figures*, 1978, p. 220.



of Kirgiz, and 18.2% of Kazakhs had received such an education, compared to 28.1% of the Soviet population as a whole (these figures refer to *nationalities*, not residents of the republics'.<sup>45</sup>

Allowing for the large number of children among the Muslim nationalities, and for the relative backwardness of rural schools which still persists, these nationalities are well on the way to reaching the general level of the whole Soviet population – and all this in the space of a couple of decades. On the foundations of this great advance in secondary education, a fund of highly skilled specialist manpower is being built up. . . .<sup>46</sup>

In the US, in 1960, 20.1% of all blacks over the age of 25 had completed secondary education, compared to 43.2% of whites.<sup>47</sup> This black to white ratio of .47 contrasts with comparable Soviet ratio in 1959 of .74 or Asians to Europeans who completed secondary school. In 1970, Puerto Ricans over the age of 25 averaged a total of only 6.9 years of schooling, compared with 12.2 for the US. These figures reflect the comparably immense progress made by minorities in education in the USSR.<sup>48</sup>

The Soviets' expenditure per capita on education in the non-Asiatic and Transcaucasian republics has been consistently higher than in the European areas. For example, in 1955, annual expenditure per capita in Azerbaidzhan was 1.18 times the USSR average; in Turkmenistan 1.30 times; in Tajikistan 1.27 times; in Kirgizia, 1.15 times and in Uzbekistan 1.00 times the USSR average. This is because of the higher birth rates in Central Asia; in 1955 the Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics had 15% of the population, but 18% of the school children and 18% of the teachers.<sup>50</sup> In most cases, the higher proportion of school age children, which corresponds almost exactly to the distribution of teachers, is closely proportional to the additional expenditure in the republics.

This Soviet practice of allocating resources proportional to the number of students differs radically from the US practice of spending far more per student in wealthy than in poor areas, as well as maintaining significantly lower faculty/student ratios in the wealthier areas and districts. In 1975, New York State spent \$409 per primary and secondary school student compared to \$194 per student in Kentucky and \$197 in Mississippi. In New York City in 1970, the student/teacher ratio was 18.5 to 1 and in San Francisco 19.2 to 1, compared to 29.2 to 1 for Detroit and 28.5 to 1 for St. Louis.<sup>51</sup> The variation, both in funds allocated per student and student/teacher ratios is significantly greater between wealthy suburban neighbourhoods and urban ghettos and impoverished rural areas (e.g. the South, Appalachia) than it is between States or cities.

In higher education the Asiatic peoples have also made great progress. In the USSR in 1970–71, six nationalities had a higher student/population ratio than the national average: Jews 2.60, Georgians 1.43, Armenians 1.34, Russians 1.12 and Azerbaidzhani 1.04. The Asiatic nationalities compared



favourably to the European in all cases in this respect; for example, in addition to the Azerbaidzhani, the Kazakhs, Kirgiz and Uzbeks rank above the Ukrainians and Latvians (all of these are at least 80% of the USSR average). Of all the Republics only Uzbekistan is spending significantly less on higher education per pupil than the Russian Republic (here it is about 20% less). The highest expenditure per student is in Armenia and Estonia where it is about 28% higher than in the Russian Republic (see Table 2.6).

Table 2.6  
Higher Education by Nationality

	<i>Students per 1,000 Population of Nationality 1970-71</i>	<i>Over- representation Index</i>	<i>Expenditure per Student by Republic 1965 (roubles)</i>
USSR	18.95	1.00	413
Jews	49.19	2.60	—
Georgians	27.06	1.43	322
Armenians	22.90	1.34	458
Russians	21.15	1.12	358
Azerbaidzhani	19.35	1.04	348
Kazakhs	18.93	1.00	338
Lithuanians	18.69	0.99	405
Kirgiz	18.18	0.97	335
Estonians	17.78	0.93	462
Uzbeks	16.39	0.87	290
Ukrainians	15.25	0.80	331
Latvians	15.24	0.81	347
Tatars	14.67	0.78	—
Turkmen	14.75	0.78	328
Belorussians	14.38	0.76	403
Tadzhiks	13.16	0.69	338
Moldavians	11.42	0.60	360

Source: Katz et al., 1975, *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, p. 456; and Mickiewicz, 1973, *Handbook of Soviet Social Science Data*, p. 156.

The Soviets have achieved virtual equality for the Asiatic nationalities both in effort invested in higher education and results. To appreciate the Soviet achievement, educational attainments should be compared to the equivalent areas of the Middle East, e.g. Turkey and Iran. In 1959 the number of students in higher education in Iran was 9 per 10,000, and in Turkey 15 per 10,000.<sup>52</sup> This compares to 194 per 10,000 for Soviet Azerbaidzhan, 147 for



Soviet Turkmenistan and 132 for Soviet Tadzhikistan, which share the same ethnic groups with Turkey and Iran (1970-71 figures). This represents a ratio of about 10 times in favour of the equivalent Soviet populations.<sup>53</sup> In 1970 in the US, the overall student/population ratio in higher education was 239 per 10,000; with 153 for blacks (64% of the national rate) and 113 for Latins.<sup>54</sup> The access to higher education of national minorities in the USSR is significantly greater than in the US.

The educational advances of Soviet Asians are reflected in statistics for the number of scientific workers by nationality. Government policy has been to systematically develop a national intelligentsia in each republic.

Table 2.7  
Scientific Workers by Nationality 1971

Nationality	Number	% of Total	Index of Over-representation	
			Per Capita	Per Adult Population*
USSR TOTAL	1,002,930	100%	1.00	1.00
Jews	66,793	6.66	7.48	—
Armenians	22,056	2.20	1.50	1.83
Georgians	19,411	1.94	1.45	1.48
Russians	666,059	66.41	1.24	1.20
Estonians	4,959	0.49	1.17	1.03
Latvians	6,262	0.62	1.05	.91
Lithuanians	8,751	0.87	0.79	.75
Azerbaidzhani	13,998	1.40	0.77	1.02
Ukrainians	107,475	10.72	0.64	.59
Belorussians	20,538	2.05	0.55	.55
Tatars	12,619	1.26	0.51	—
Turkmen	1,946	0.19	0.40	.55
Kazakhs	8,629	0.86	0.39	.45
Kirgiz	2,100	0.21	0.35	.45
Uzbeks	12,928	1.29	0.34	.47
Tadzhiks	2,550	0.25	0.28	.39
Moldavians	2,624	0.26	0.23	.25

Source: Katz et al., 1975, *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, p. 457.

\* Computed on the assumption that the age structure of each nationality is identical to that of its titular republic.

Although the average number of scientific workers per capita for the seven Asiatic nationalities (including Tatars) is only 43% of the Soviet average, since there was virtually no native scientific intelligentsia in the Asian region before the Bolshevik Revolution, these groups have clearly made considerable



progress. It should also be noted that, owing to the fact that compared to the European groups the Asian population is significantly younger, computing a ratio of over-representation on a per capita basis, rather than on a per employed person basis, substantially lowers the index for the Asian peoples and raises it for the older, European populations. When age structure is taken into account the representation index of scientific workers from the Asiatic nationalities rises to over 50%. Nevertheless, because it takes time to develop a native intelligentsia from a backward society, even under the most favourable conditions, many scientific workers in the Asian Republics are people who have migrated from the European USSR. That this is not as a result of 'Russification' policies or of discrimination is testified to by the low involvement of Slavic intelligentsia in Georgia and Armenia, and the fact that Georgians and Armenians are more strongly represented among the scientific intelligentsia than any other national group with the exception of the Jews. In 1969, 94% of all scientific workers in Armenia were Armenian, while nearly half the total of Armenian scientific workers worked outside Armenia.<sup>55</sup>

According to Wheeler, '... the same standards of preliminary, secondary and higher education obtain throughout the Union, and academic posts, whether in the social sciences or in technology, appear to be open to all alike.' Wheeler also notes that in the mid-1960s the president of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences was an Uzbek geologist of international reputation who had not learnt to read until he was 19 years old.<sup>56</sup>

## **Cultural Development**

Soviet policy has been to encourage the development of national cultures and the preservation of the native languages.\* Under the Czar there existed a policy of Russification, but now education, and all forms of media, are in the native languages. Russian is taught as a second language throughout the country, both as a lingua franca and because, as a major world language, it affords access to a far wider body of literary and scientific writings than it could ever be possible to translate into each of the minor languages.

Numerous books, magazines and newspapers are published, and are readily available, in all the major minority languages. The relative number

\* The Soviet Constitution (Article 36) specifies the formal rights of national minorities in the USSR:

Citizens of the USSR of different races and nationalities have equal rights. Exercise of these rights is ensured by a policy of all-round development and drawing together of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR, by educating citizens in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism, and by the possibility to use their native language and the languages of other peoples of the USSR. Any direct or indirect limitation of the rights of citizens, or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on grounds of race or nationality, or any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness, hostility or contempt, are punishable by law.



of publications in the native languages in the various republics is roughly proportional to the percentage of the local population of that nationality. (see Table 2.8).

Table 2.8  
Books and Newspapers Published in Union Republics, 1970

<i>Republic</i>	<i>% of Book Titles Published, Which are in the Titular Language</i>	<i>Total Copies of Books Published per 100 Speakers of the Titular Language</i>	<i>% of All Newspapers which are in the Titular Language</i>	<i>National Group % in Population of Each Republic</i>
RSFSR	93	562	93	82.2
Ukraine	37	226	80	74.9
Belorussia	21	110	75	81.1
Uzbekistan	44	239	57	64.7
Kazakhstan	31	239	37	32.4
Georgia	73	370	86	66.8
Azerbaidzhan	64	192	80	73.8
Lithuania	64	433	81	80.1
Moldavia	31	211	47	64.6
Latvia	52	739	64	56.8
Kirgizia	47	223	55	43.8
Tadzhikistan	52	167	84	56.2
Armenia	75	212	88	88.6
Turkmenia	65	242	70	65.6
Estonia	74	890	72	68.2

Source: Katz et al., 1975, *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, pp. 459-60.

In many republics the share of total circulation of books in the native language is higher than the number of titles, for example, in Kazakhstan, about one-third of the titles published are in Kazakh, but over half the circulation is of Kazakh books.<sup>57</sup> In Azerbaidzhan, 81% of newspapers but 97% of magazine circulation is of Azerbaidzhani language periodicals. In Kirgizia both the magazine circulation and the percentage of the total number of copies of books published in Kirgiz is much higher than the proportion of titles in Kirgiz.<sup>58</sup>

The annual number of copies of new books published in the native languages of Soviet Asia varies from 2.4 per capita in Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazakh, to 2.2 in Kirgiz, and 1.9 in Azerbaidzhani to 1.7 in Tadzhik. (see Table 2.8).



Before the Bolshevik Revolution virtually no books were published in any of these languages. The few books written by native authors were published outside their native areas in languages other than their native tongue. Printing in Central Asian languages was strictly limited to direct lithography, i.e. reproduction from material written on stone surfaces by hand. Only Kazakh and Turkmen were beginning to assume a literary form.<sup>59</sup>

In the USSR the highest ratio of total copies of new books published per capita annually is in Estonian and Latvian, with ratios of 8.9 and 7.4 per capita in 1970 (see Table 2.8). The ratio of books in Russian per capita published each year in 1970 was 5.6. Naturally, the number of books issued in Russian is considerably higher than for the Asian languages since so much scientific and technical work, as well as world literature and special studies, appear in this language. Russian is read both by experts and the general intelligentsia as a second language throughout the nation. The very high ratios of the Baltic republics bear witness to the fact that this is not as a result of a Russification policy or of suppression of local languages.

For at least 80% of all the major nationalities of the USSR, with the exception of Jews, their mother tongue is their primary language. The percentage is higher – almost 99% – in Soviet Asia.

Table 2.9  
Speakers of Languages of Major Nationalities of USSR, 1970

<i>Language</i>	<i>% of the Nationality Identifying National Language as Mother Tongue</i>
Russian	
Turkmen	98.9
Kirgiz	98.8
Uzbek	98.6
Tadzhik	98.5
Georgian	98.4
Azerbaidzhani	98.2
Kazakh	98.0
Lithuanian	97.9
Estonian	95.5
Latvian	95.2
Moldavian	95.0
Armenian	91.4
Tatar	89.2
Ukrainian	85.7
Belorussian	80.2
Jewish languages	17.7

Source: Katz et al., 1975, *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, p. 446.



All nationalities of the USSR may choose to be educated in their native languages, and all the major nationalities may receive their entire education through college in the language of their republic.<sup>60</sup> That most students from the various nationalities take advantage of this option without discrimination has been testified to by many Western scholars. For example, in Lithuania, 'students who begin their education in Lithuanian suffer no discrimination at higher levels; university instruction is almost exclusively in Lithuanian.'<sup>61</sup> Most students in the Baltic countries receive their education in the Baltic languages. In Estonia's general schools, for example, 73% use Estonian and 8% use both Estonian and Russian. In 1960, 89% of higher education students studied in Estonian. Further, a significant number of those of Russian nationality attend Estonian language schools at all levels.<sup>62</sup>

In Central Asia, however, there is a disproportionate number of non-Asian immigrants in higher education – 30% in 1959 – even though they represented only about 20% of the population. Nevertheless, compared to the situation before the Revolution, or even in the late 1920s, the progress in this context is significant. To quote a Western scholar 'When . . . this situation is compared with that prevailing thirty years ago when there were no higher educational establishments which Muslims could attend, progress can be seen as remarkable.'<sup>63</sup>

There is no tendency for native languages to be undermined and replaced by Russian; the evidence indicates precisely the opposite, including officially sponsored campaigns to purify the native languages of 'Russianisms'.<sup>64</sup> From 1959 to 1970, the percentage of Azerbaidzhani speaking their native language increased from 97.6% to 98.2% (and of these only 16.6% said they spoke Russian as a second language).<sup>65</sup> Similarly among the Uzbeks, of whom, in 1970, only 13% stated they spoke Russian as a second language.

The US's language policy contrasts very sharply with that of the USSR. The long standing tradition implemented in the policies of American schools, courts and all governmental institutions, has been to make English the only acceptable language. As part of the official 'Americanization' policy, the languages of the various European immigrant groups, as well as those of the native peoples and the blacks forcibly taken from Africa, the Spanish and other Latin-based languages of recent immigrants from the other Americas, have, along with the traditional cultures and national practices of these groups, been undermined. US policy has been consistently to submit all peoples resident in the US to one 'melting pot' in which the English language and 'American values' were universal. Traditionally, education in all public schools was in English; the legal system operated in English only, as did road signs and so on.

Beginning in the late 1960s the traditional, enforced monolingual/monocultural Americanization policy was moderated somewhat with the passing of a Federal Bilingual Education Act which gave grants to those schools in districts wishing to set up bilingual education programmes (the decision whether or not to set up such programmes was left entirely to each school district). In 1974, the US Supreme Court ruled that those school



districts with large proportions of non-English speaking students were violating the 'civil rights' of those students by not providing bilingual programmes for them, but did not specify how this was to be implemented. In 1975, to comply with the Supreme Court decision, the US Department of Education issued guidelines (which, however, did not have the authority of law) for the establishment of bilingual education programmes. The issue of bilingual education became highly controversial in the latter part of the 1970s and the early 1980s. Some arguing that the basic curriculum should be taught in all languages where the majority of students did not speak English, others that only special courses to teach English to non-native speakers should be available — designed to prepare them for basic instruction in English; and still others that the traditional policy of 'sink or swim' (with no Federal or State requirements for non-English instruction) should continue at the discretion of each local school district. Finally, at the end of 1980, the Federal government issued strict guidelines requiring those school districts with more than 25 students all speaking the same foreign language to offer them instruction in their own language as well as in English. The first official act of the new Secretary of Education in the Reagan Administration in 1981 was to revoke these requirements as 'harsh, inflexible, burdensome, unworkable and incredibly costly'.<sup>66</sup>

In 1980, approximately 500, or 3%, of the US's around 16,500 school districts had some form of bilingual educational programme. In the Fiscal Year 1981, the Federal government provided these 500 districts with \$175 million to support their programmes. It has been estimated that in 1980 there were 3.5 million non-English speaking school-age children in the US; 70% of whom were native Spanish speakers. In New York City, for example, 30% of all students in the public schools were Latins.<sup>67</sup> The Federal subsidy for bilingual education averages out to \$50 per non-English speaking student, or a third of a million per school district with bilingual programmes. Compared to Soviet language policy, the US effort is insignificant.

In the USSR Russian is taught as a second language in all republics. To advance in most professional careers beyond a certain point the ability to at least read and write Russian is essential. This is because — to quote the prominent Soviet dissident Roy Medvedev —

you can't do without the Russian language . . . which enables the different nationalities to communicate with one another. . . . Most scientific and literary works are published in Russian in all the republics. A book on mathematics or philosophy published in Georgian, say, would have no circulation outside of Georgia.<sup>68</sup>

Medvedev goes on to illustrate his point by relating that at one time there was a tendency for official Ukrainian agencies to correspond with other regions of the USSR in their own language only. When a Ukrainian minister wrote to Moscow there was usually someone who could understand the language, but in Georgia or Tadjikistan, there were very few who could.



Consequently they began to respond to the Ukrainians in *their* language (which hardly anyone in the Ukraine could understand). Papers at national scientific conferences were often read in the various local languages. In both cases, the problem of each group speaking its own language to other groups soon became apparent, and Russian again became the common language of communication.

The universality of Russian perhaps makes professional advancement a little easier for those whose mother tongue is Russian. But that such an advantage is minimal is exemplified by the Armenians and Georgians (neither of whose native tongues are Slavic) who are more successful than Russians in pursuing scientific careers.

Soviet policy, while it favours the development and preservation of native culture and language, also encourages migration of various nationalities throughout the USSR, especially to the resource rich, underpopulated areas of Siberia and much of Central Asia. Thus large numbers of Slavs, mostly Russians and Ukrainians, have settled in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan where they have become the majority of the total population. In recent years, however, apparently largely because of the high birth rates among Soviet Asians, the proportion of the population that is of the titular nationality has increased in all six Asiatic republics (see Table 2.10).

Soviet policy has always been to encourage preservation and development of the local cultures. In the 1920s, any group that felt itself to be a nationality was officially encouraged to develop its language, culture and sense of social cohesion. This was supported by the state by opening schools, publishing books and periodicals, and wherever the group was sufficiently concentrated geographically, given various degrees of local self-government. Generally the larger the group, the greater the extent of local autonomy. In the post-World War II period, this policy has been continued for groups of any significant size and geographical concentration.<sup>69</sup> From the 1920s, in Soviet Asia, literature in the native languages and native art forms accessible to the people blossomed with government and Party support. The theatre and opera were introduced and proved extremely popular. Theatres built in all the principal towns of Central Asia maintain their own repertory companies which perform works both by local playwrights and of translations into the local languages, of works by Shakespeare, Moliere, Puccini, Jack London, as well as major Russian authors. Ballet and orchestral music have also proved to be very popular in Central Asia. Many native music writers have worked in traditional themes with traditional music.<sup>70</sup> The cinema too has been widely developed. In 1915 there were said to be 52 cinemas throughout Central Asia, but by the 1960s there were approximately 7,000 permanent and mobile cinemas in operation.<sup>71</sup> In Uzbekistan there are 5,820 public libraries with holdings of over 32 million books and magazines.<sup>72</sup>

Soviets celebrate the native cultures on a Union-wide level. For example, there are regular and widely publicized cultural festivals which give the artists and cultures of the various Republics not only nation-wide but also



Table 2.10

Titular Nationality as Percent of Republic Population, 1959-70

Republic	Titular Nationality as % of Total Republic Population			% Russian	
	1959	1970	1979	1970	1979
Armenian SSR	88.0	88.6	89.7	2.7%	2.3
RSFSR	83.3	82.8	82.6	82.8	82.6
Belorussian SSR	81.1	81.0	79.4	10.4	11.9
Lithuanian SSR	79.3	80.1	80.0	8.6	8.9
Ukraine SSR	76.8	74.9	73.6	19.4	21.1
Azerbaidzhan SSR	67.5	73.8	78.1	10.1	7.9
Estonian SSR	74.6	68.2	64.7	24.7	27.9
Georgian SSR	64.3	66.8	68.8	8.5	7.4
Turkmen SSR	60.9	65.6	68.4	14.5	12.6
Uzbek SSR	61.1	64.7	68.7	12.5	10.8
Moldavian SSR	65.4	64.6	63.9	11.6	12.8
Latvian SSR	62.0	56.8	53.7	29.8	32.8
Tadzhik SSR	53.1	56.2	58.8	11.9	10.4
Tatar ASSR	47.2	49.1	—	—	—
Kirgiz SSR	40.5	43.8	47.9	29.2	25.9
Kazakh SSR	30.0	32.6	36.0	42.4	40.8

Source: Katz et al., 1975, *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, pp. 10, 444; Sharp, *The East European and Soviet Data Handbook*, pp. 148-55.

international publicity. Between 1936 and 1960 25 Republics staged festivals in Moscow, and between 1957 and 1969 14 Republics staged festivals in Uzbekistan.

This multinational culture developed by the Soviets both gives expression to the various national traditions and promotes the adoption of new Socialist culture.

Publishing, the theatre and the other arts in the native languages are far more highly developed in Soviet Asia than in the comparable countries of the east. In the words of one Soviet Central Asia expert:

Taken on the basis of population, publishing of all forms of literature in Central Asia was soon far to exceed that in any of the other Muslim countries in Asia, and with one or two exceptions the standard of printing and production was much higher. The technical literary quality of modern Central Asian literature in the 1960s was probably as good if not better than that of Middle Eastern literature and it was free from the pernicious rubbish circulating either in original writing or in



translation in many non-Soviet Muslim countries. Some of the novels of such Kazakh writers as Auezov and Mukanov, of the Turkmen writer Kerbabayev, and the memoirs of the Tadzhik writer Sadreddin Aini, are works of undoubted literary merit, and many other examples could be cited.<sup>73</sup>

For ethnic minorities in the US the situation is radically different. Traditional ethnic cultures are systematically undermined through official policies designed to create an ethnically homogeneous 'American culture'. Virtually nothing is done to encourage either the development or the perpetuation of traditional black, Indian, Latin, Asian or European cultures of those peoples in the US. The result of the long term 'melting pot' policies has been the destruction or eventual disappearance of all these peoples' traditional cultures.

Except for a few Republics in the USSR with very low birth rates and a high level of wealth, for example Estonia, most of the non-Russian Republics (and autonomous regions) are becoming *increasingly* homogeneous in their titular nationality. The percentage of the population of most republics who speak the titular tongue as their primary language is generally increasing. In the US it has been consistently the opposite. Most of the original European settlers at first tended to settle in relatively ethnically homogeneous enclaves (Scandinavians in various upper Mid-West and North-Western rural areas; Irish, Italians, Poles, Jews, etc. in ethnically distinct neighbourhoods of the Northern cities). Almost all blacks were originally concentrated in the 'black belt' counties of the South, where slavery and share-cropping thrived; and most Latins were concentrated in New Mexico and other South-Western enclaves of original settlement. Since World War I all these ethnic concentrations have been rapidly dissipating — the indigenous American Indians have also in good part been dispersed to the cities. European ethnic neighbourhoods are now rare in the US, having been replaced by neighbourhoods geographically segregated by class. Latins are rapidly dispersing out of the South-West (Chicanos) and New York City (Puerto Ricans) to all the major industrial areas. Blacks, 90% of whom lived in the South in 1910, were, by 1980, almost equally divided between the South and the rest of the country. The process of geographical dispersal continues. In 1960, the State of Mississippi was 42.0% black, in 1976 35.6%; Alabama was 30.0% black, in 1976 20.7%. On the other hand, New York State was 8.4% black in 1960, and 12.5% black in 1976; Illinois 10.3% and 15.4%; and California 5.6% and 7.8%.<sup>74</sup> Again, the pattern is opposite to that in the USSR. Soviet developmental policies which favour the minority areas have resulted in the economically favoured less developed areas retaining their indigenous populations, rather than in their systematic dispersal as in the capitalist countries — where minority areas serve as sources of low paid immigrant workers to the industrial heartland.



## Politics

Communist Party membership in the six Asiatic republics is somewhat less than the Soviet average, the ratio of the percentage of all Party members to the percentage of the total adult population here is .78.<sup>75</sup> Communist Party membership of the various *nationalities*, however, is low relative to their population. The ratio of the percentage of Communist Party members in the six major Asian nationalities to their percentage of the total population in 1971 averaged .54 (see Table 2.11). The main reasons for this disparity are: (1) higher birth rates among the Soviet Asians which results in a significantly younger age structure and thus reduces the number of those eligible for membership; and (2) the CPSU recruitment policy which, especially since the mid-1960s, favours industrial workers and the intelligentsia above rural populations. In spite of the rapid increase both in technical education and urbanization, the rural backwardness of the Asian nationalities has not been entirely eliminated and consequently they are still under-represented in the Party.

Table 2.11

National Composition of CPSU, 1 January 1972: Union Republic Nationalities

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Party Members as % of Union Total</i>	<i>Index of Over- representation</i>
Georgians	242,253	1.66	1.24
Russians	8,927,400	61.02	1.14
Armenians	223,372	1.52	1.04
Ukrainians	2,333,750	15.95	0.95
Belorussians	511,981	3.50	0.94
Azerbaidzhani	206,184	1.41	0.78
Kazakhs	246,393	1.68	0.77
Estonians	45,454	0.31	0.74
Latvians	60,843	0.42	0.71
Lithuanians	93,271	0.64	0.58
Kirgiz	45,205	0.31	0.52
Uzbeks	282,918	1.93	0.51
Turkmen	43,111	0.29	0.46
Tadzhiks	57,271	0.39	0.44
Moldavians	58,062	0.40	0.36
Other Nationalities	1,253,821	8.57	1.28
<i>Total</i>	<i>14,631,289</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>

Source: Katz et al., 1975, *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, p. 449.



It should be noted that in 1924 only 8% of the Party members in Kazakhstan were Kazakh, compared to about 40% in the mid-1960s. In this later period the proportion of Kazakhs who were Party members exceeded the proportion of the Kazakhs (about 33%) in the total population of Kazakhstan.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, Kazakhs are over-represented in the Kazakh Supreme Soviet, comprising about 40% of delegates, and among leading party officials. A study of Kazakh party leaders in the 1955-64 period showed that approximately half of all provincial, district and city first secretaries were ethnically Kazakh.<sup>77</sup> In Uzbekistan in 1967, 67% of the deputies of the local Supreme Soviet were Uzbeks compared to about 64% of the population. In general, throughout the Asiatic Republics the official heads of state, most ministers, first party secretaries, and most responsible government officials at all levels (except where Russians predominate) are natives.<sup>78</sup> Non-Asians, however, owing to their higher technical qualifications, generally predominate among industrial managers – who usually need to have an engineering degree – and heads of departments where technical expertise is required. The concentration of non-Asians in positions in which high levels of technical competence are necessary, is a result of the time lag in technical education among native peoples rather than discrimination in favour of Slavs, as the substantial role played by Armenians and Georgians as managers and technical experts in Soviet Asia demonstrates.<sup>79</sup>

It is sometimes argued that the considerable limits on the political autonomy of the various Republics necessarily means that they are dominated by the Russian Republic. But in fact, all the Republics, including Russia, are centrally controlled by a single Party and economic plan corresponding to a relatively rational division of labour. In the words of the Soviet dissident Roy Medvedev:

If our republics have no real political or economic autonomy, that's not because Russia . . . controls them. The Russian Republic has even less autonomy. . . .

In countries like the Soviet Union, economic planning embraces the interests of the entire state and provides for a division of labour calculated on a statewide basis. It wouldn't make much sense to convert the cotton plantations of Uzbekistan into wheat fields or Georgia's tea plantations, vineyards, and market gardens, . . . to potato cultivation. Nor would it be logical to build a steel mill in Georgia to produce steel only for Georgia.<sup>80</sup>

In the US where 11.7% of the total population was black in 1978, 3.0% of all members of the US Congress and 3.5% of all State legislators were black. In Mississippi, the State with the highest percentage of blacks in the US (35.6%) 3.5% of legislators were black; in South Carolina where in 1978 31.6% were black, 7.7% of the State legislators were black, and in Louisiana (28.6% black), 7.0% of State legislators were black.<sup>81</sup> Blacks, the largest ethnic minority in the US, are significantly under-represented politically –



by a factor of 3-4. In the USSR, in contrast, the Asian minorities are at least proportionately represented in their Republics both in leading governmental and Party positions. It should also be noted that while over the 1919-35 period there were no Asians on the Politburo (Praesidium) of the CPSU, and in the 1939-63 period only 2% were Asians, in 1973, 8%, and in 1980 11.5%, were ethnically Asian. The six major Asian nationalities – those with Republics – were 12% of the Soviet population in 1979, and all ethnically Asian about 15% (17% counting Tatars).

## **Soviet Policy Towards Islam**

All six Asiatic Republics were strongly Islamic before the 1917 Revolution. Immediately after their seizure of power the Bolsheviks appealed to the Muslim nationalities for support, and in December 1917 they issued the following:

Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirgiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Chechens and mountain Cossacks! All you, whose mosques and shrines have been destroyed, whose faith and customs have been violated by the Tsars and oppressors of Russia! Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared free and inviolable! Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, will be protected by the might of the Revolution, by the councils of workers, soldiers, peasants, deputies!<sup>82</sup>

While the Bolsheviks, as we have seen, generally supported the rights of the Muslim nationalities they adopted a policy of undermining the influence of the Islamic religion as part of their general campaign to undermine all religion as superstition. They considered Islam to be as pernicious as other religions because of its past manipulation both by Eastern potentates and Western imperial powers. Primarily, the attack on Islam was directed at its less fundamental aspects, such as the veiling, and the seclusion, of women, polygamy, child betrothal, bride price, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and circumcision, which the Soviets regarded as a barbaric abuse of children.<sup>83</sup> The Soviet's emphasized women's liberation, especially in Turkestan, where the practice of female seclusion took extreme forms.<sup>83</sup> In the late 1920s and 1930s many mosques were closed and a number of religious leaders either deported or imprisoned. The practice of Islam itself, however, was never proscribed, and, according to at least some Western experts on the area, the campaign against the customs that the Soviets regard as harmful were never as repressive as those taken by the nationalist governments of some non-Soviet Muslim countries, such as Turkey.<sup>85</sup>

There are two Islamic theological colleges in the USSR, one in Bukhara,



with 63 students in 1980, and one in Tashkent with 36 students.<sup>86</sup> In 1953, the Mufti of Tashkent estimated that there were between 200 and 300 active mosques in Central Asia.<sup>87</sup> A limited number of Islamic books are published by the Spiritual Directorate for Sunni Muslims in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, including the Koran, in Arabic, in 1947, and another edition in 1964. Each year it also publishes a limited edition of an Islamic calendar.<sup>88</sup>

The theology and rites of Islam in the Soviet Union remain orthodox — mostly Sunni. The leaders of Islam in the Soviet Union have never been accused of heresy (*shirk*), infidelity (*kufr*) or innovation (*bida*). Nevertheless, all religious students trained in the USSR receive a thorough political and social education along with their orthodox theology. Both as a result of the method of selection and of education their political attitudes tend to be progressive and pro-Soviet. Muslim delegations from the Islamic world regularly visit Central Asia and are received by Soviet Islamic leaders; likewise, Muslim delegations from the USSR regularly tour the Islamic countries. Members of such Soviet goodwill delegations speak perfect Arabic and have a thorough knowledge of all aspects of the Islamic faith. These meetings, between Soviet and non-Soviet Islamic delegations, function as an important mechanism for winning friends in the Islamic world.<sup>89</sup>

While many Islamic customs are maintained, today, according to Jukes, 'the influence of Islam, while difficult to gauge, does not appear great'.<sup>90</sup> This appears to apply especially to Azerbaidzhan. *The Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities* reports that in Azerbaidzhan 'Islam withered away', and experienced a 'gradual erosion of traditional Islamic life'.<sup>91</sup>

Azerbaidzhan presents two cultural worlds: one urban in which Islam and its traditional customs, art, and literature have largely died; the other rural and isolated in which women still wear black shawls and Moslem values have more than historical significance. But, in sum, Islam lingers on more as a source of tradition than as an actively worshipped religion. While such Moslem customs persist as circumcision, religious proverbs, naming of children with Allah's attributes, and early marriage for women, the five pillars of faith are no longer observed. *Zakat* [alms] is forbidden, public prayer is quite rare, Ramadan (month of fasting) conflicts with work schedules and is effectively discouraged, and Hajj is limited to a handful of token pilgrims allowed to visit Mecca.<sup>92</sup>

To a somewhat lesser degree, what is true of Azerbaidzhan is true of Central Asia. As urbanization and education proceed apace the residues of Islam are everywhere being undermined.

That religious Islamic sentiments have become largely eroded throughout Soviet Asia even while some traditional non-religious Islamic customs remain seems virtually to be the consensus of scholarly Western experts, as well as of journalists and diplomats personally familiar with the region. A feature article in the *New York Times* reported:



Western and other foreign specialists here are skeptical of a theory widely circulated in the West that the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan was motivated largely by fear that a spread of Islamic fundamentalism through Central Asia might infect the adjacent Soviet Moslem peoples.

Diplomats and journalists who have traveled recently in the Moslem republics of Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus report that religion has been eroded in the lives of the 40 million or so people of Moslem tradition. . . .

The Soviet authorities seem to feel complete confidence now in the loyalty of their Moslem peoples, . . . Moscow's confidence appears to be illustrated by reports from Afghanistan that many of the soldiers sent for the intervention are Tadzhiks or others of Moslem tradition.

The atmosphere is even more secular in Central Asia than in Moslem areas of the Caucasus. The mosques, minarets and mausoleums of ancient glory are state museums now, tourist attractions. The small and humble mosques open for worship are sparsely attended by the elderly. Young people are seldom seen there.<sup>93</sup>

## **Anti-Soviet and Anti-Socialist Nationalist Attitudes and Movements**

If the people of the Asiatic republics were, or felt that they were, oppressed by the Soviet regime it is to be expected that in some way this would be manifested by such phenomena as nationalist movements, spontaneous resistance, hostile attitudes expressed by the population against Russians, a resurgence of religion, pan-Islamic sympathies or a dissident movement among intellectuals. Such events have occurred in Lithuania and Estonia, as well as in Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania. However, there is virtually no evidence of any such activity in Soviet Asia — most major Western experts on the area seem to agree on this. Acceptance of Soviet institutions appears to be complete and the potential for any significant secessionist or anti-socialist nationalist movement absent.

One expert, Wheeler, for example, tells us of:

The absence of characteristic indications of nationalism or nationalist movement. . . . [He goes on] Of the existence even in embryo of nationalist movements of the kind experienced in other empires there are few if any characteristic indications. Elsewhere, and before the Revolution in the Russian empire such indications have included the existence of easily identifiable, nationalist leaders either at large or in exile, internal disturbances and acts of sabotage, the existence abroad of dedicated nationalist committees receiving active support from foreign governments, and a more or less steady stream of refugees into adjoining countries. In empires other than the Russian and Soviet there



have been added the phenomena of the nationalist press and literature and the presence of active, or at any rate vocal, opposition groups in parliament. Of all these hitherto characteristic indications of nationalism the only one which can be discerned today in relation to Central Asia is the existence abroad of a few nationalist organizations most of them formed and all of them financed from foreign, usually private, resources.<sup>94</sup>

Wheeler approvingly quotes another Soviet Central Asian expert, Alexander Bennigsen, who states:

... there is no question of opposition to the system; indeed, it seems that the Muslims of the USSR, peasants, workers and intellectuals alike, are really trying to adapt themselves to the way of life of the 'model man' advocated by the authorities.<sup>95</sup>

Nove and Newth argue that the lack of any reports in the West of opposition to the Soviet system in Central Asia is evidence of the absence of such opposition, on the grounds that anti-Russian sentiments in other areas, such as the Baltic countries and Georgia are widely reported in the West.

The Georgians happen to be particularly open in telling foreign visitors just what they think about Russia and Muscovite rule. It is rarer to hear such things from the Uzbeks and Tajiks. Since the police system is much the same throughout the Soviet Union and since the Georgians appear to have no special difficulty in conveying their views to others, the fact that one hears much less of anti-Russian nationalism in Central Asia cannot be attributed merely to fear.<sup>96</sup>

The *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities* reports that no apparent national antagonism exists in Central Asia between the native and Russian intelligentsia. Analyses of interviews with those who have left the Soviet Union confirm the good relationship between Russians and Asians in the Asiatic republics. These anti-Soviet emigrées 'attached little significance to various incidents of national friction which, being prompted, they had been able to recall'.<sup>97</sup> Experts on each of the different Asiatic nationalities reach the same conclusion.

If the term 'Uzbek nationalists' is used to mean those who demand a fully independent state for an Uzbek or Turkic nation — complete sovereignty based on separation from the USSR — then Moscow has not had to confront Uzbek nationalists since the 1920s, certainly no later than the 1930s.<sup>98</sup>

In Azerbaidzhan 'In recent years no outbreaks of nationalism have been documented by Western sources, Russian official media, or *samizdat*', and,



'Nationalism, if it exists, is expressed through a distinctive life style and national pride rather than by political agitation'.<sup>99</sup>

In Turkmenia 'in recent times, manifestations of nationalism have been restricted primarily to activities within established institutions', such as arguing 'that all leading posts should be occupied by Turkmen'.<sup>100</sup> In Kazakhstan there is a 'lack of expression of nationalist tensions' and 'of dissent, only isolated cases are known and those involved non-Kazakhs'.<sup>101</sup>

Wheeler reports

... active resistance to the process of Westernization gradually disappeared. Although one would hardly expect any extensive labour or social disturbances to be reported in the Soviet press, it is significant that the only disturbances even rumored have been among the non-Asian inhabitants of Central Asia. \*<sup>102</sup>

Almost the sole substantive claim relating to nationalism which appears in the Western literature is that younger Asian artists and writers seem to be developing an increasing interest in their past and their cultural traditions. This is not discouraged by Soviet policies, which have consistently aimed to build up national consciousness (as opposed to Islamic or tribal consciousness) among the people of Soviet Asia, and thus, it cannot be considered as a sign of discontent with either socialism or integration into the Soviet Union.

While experts on the area generally agree that there is little or no separatist or anti-Soviet feeling in the Asiatic republics, some do suggest that possibly such sentiments may develop in the future. These predictions tend to be based solely on the fact that Central Asians have an Islamic and Asiatic background:

Not all Western students of the nationality question are as convinced that the 'nationality problem' has been resolved in the USSR. In 1971 Zbigniew Brzezinski was quoted as observing: 'It is not inconceivable that in the next several decades the nationality problem will become politically more important in the Soviet Union than the racial issue has become in the United States.' Many Western specialists who deal

\* An exception to what almost all Western analysts and observers report as the absence of anti-Russian hostility appears in a 1979 article by Steven Burg. He claimed that there is 'increasing evidence of inter-ethnic conflict and hostility in Soviet Asia', and that very recent emigres from the USSR report a relatively high level of tension between Europeans and Muslims. Interestingly, he argues that this is happening because as Central Asians become more educated and enter into the scientific and technical elite, and occupy more and more responsible positions in the Party and state apparatus, they are experiencing increasing competition with cadres of European background. Burg claims (together with Brzezinski's) should probably be treated as a speculation about possible future developments rather than as empirically documented fact.<sup>103</sup>



with Uzbekistan are somewhat more cautious in their projections, but most agree that difficulties for the Soviet regime are possible.<sup>104</sup>

## Attitude of Soviet Asians to USSR Intervention in Afghanistan

The Soviet system's generally high level of legitimacy among Soviet Asians of Islamic background extends to strong support for Soviet foreign policy in the Near East, especially for the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. Since the 1920s, most educated Central Asians have tended to press the Soviet government to pursue a more active foreign policy in the Near East, by giving more support to progressive and revolutionary regimes, including the use of the Soviet Army, and incorporation of parts of the region into the Soviet Union. There is a long tradition among Soviet Asian leaders endorsing the 'transfer of revolutionary energies' from Europe to the Muslim world. In the 1920s many Muslims expressed the hope that Central Asia and the Transcaucas would be used as a 'revolutionary springboard' for the liberation of fellow Muslims, especially in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, whose ethnic groups in good part overlap with those in Soviet Central Asia, and also throughout Asia in general. Educated Soviet Asians are usually highly knowledgeable about and very interested in developments across their borders; generally, they empathize with fellow Muslims who are seeking revolutionary change. This was manifested in the immediate post-World War II period when, with the support of the Soviet Army, revolutionary regimes existed in Iranian Azerbaidzhan and Kurdistan. At this time Central Asians were inclined to argue that both areas should be incorporated into the Soviet Union.<sup>105</sup>

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 was seen by Central Asians largely as help to fellow Muslims who had been oppressed by one of the most backward feudal regimes in the world. There are significant populations both of Tadjiks and Uzbeks in Afghanistan, consequently these two peoples have been especially favourable towards Soviet aid to their fellow nationals. Bennigsen, one of the principal Western experts on Soviet Central Asia, argued in the US International Communications Agency's publication *Problems of Communism* that: 'It is likely that the present-day elites favor Soviet annexation of, if not the whole of Afghanistan, then at least Afghan Turkestan north of the Hindu Kush.'<sup>106</sup> Before the Soviet Army's intervention in Afghanistan there had been growing Soviet support for that country's revolutionary government which had been installed in April 1978. This support largely took the form of thousands of Soviet Muslims (many of whom spoke Afghan languages as their mother tongue) becoming advisers to the Afghan revolutionary government; not infrequently they would assume governmental positions. The number of Soviet Central Asians working with the Afghan government increased after December 1979. According to Bennigsen, '... far from opposing the occupation of a brother Muslim land, the Central Asian Muslim elites seemed to



welcome the adventure'.<sup>107</sup>

Most of the Soviet troops initially sent into Afghanistan were Central Asians. After the first few months, however, military units with a higher concentration of Slavs began to be introduced into the country, especially in the Pushtun area. Historically, the Pushtuns have been the political and economically dominant group in Afghanistan, and traditionally their attitude has been one of superiority to other ethnic groups which they have ruled, including the Uzbeks, other Turks and Tadjiks – whose Soviet cousins comprised the bulk of the Soviet Army. In Pushtunstan many of the Soviet Turk and Tadjik troops were attacked, and in some cases killed, not so much because of anti-Soviet sentiment, but out of Pushtun resentment against Tadjiks and Turks.<sup>108</sup>

Nearly all analysts and observers of the Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution in Iran report that, while it was welcomed by the people of Central Asia in that it deposed the pro-US and repressive Shah, it had no resonance among the masses of the people. A feature article in the *New York Times* in April 1980 concluded: '... it seems clear that the Ayatollah's Islamic revival has little chance of infecting Iran's Soviet neighbors with its militancy.' The article cites as typical of the attitudes of Soviet Asians a young Tatar woman from Bukhara who told the *Times* reporter: 'Of course, people here were glad to see the Shah out of Iran. But on the other hand we don't like the Ayatollah because of his cruelty.'<sup>109</sup>

In contrast to the Asiatic republics there is documented evidence of significant anti-Russian sentiment in Soviet Georgia, Estonia and Lithuania. There have been significant dissident movements and popular demonstrations in Estonia and Lithuania against various Soviet policies – something virtually unknown in Central Asia. The contrast between the two areas of the USSR is elaborated on in the next chapter.

## Conclusion

Most experts agree that it would be difficult to characterize the relationship between Russia and Central Asia as 'colonial' even though decision making in the USSR is highly centralized.

If one's picture of colonialism is associated with exploitation, with grinding the faces of the poor, then clearly the word does not fit the circumstances of the case. It must also be admitted that some of the accusations which are sometimes leveled against the Soviet policy in these areas are wide of the mark. Living standards do compare favourably not only with neighbouring Asian countries but also with Russia itself. The use of the Russian language in schools and universities is in some respects a mere convenience rather than a means of Russification.<sup>110</sup>



... the fostering of a sense of nationhood, and the long-sustained effort to raise levels of industrialization, personal income, educational standards and availability of social services towards those prevailing in the European USSR go considerably beyond those made by the other colonial powers in their former major possessions, and suggest strongly that the Soviet leaders have consistently striven to avoid treating the Transcaucasian and Central Asian nationalities in ways which could be defined by a Marxist as 'colonial'.

For propaganda to Asia, the Soviet Central Asian states offer a number of undoubted showpieces... the economic development of Central Asia and Transcaucasia is an obvious success for the Soviet regime.<sup>111</sup>

The Soviets broadcast their accomplishments in Central Asia, both by sending Central Asians to Africa and Asia as technical specialists to aid these countries' development, and in making a point of having visiting dignitaries and delegations from Asian and African countries visit the Transcaucasian, Central Asian and Siberian minority areas where the visitors can view conditions for themselves.<sup>112</sup>

Clearly, in no sense can the Asiatic Republics of the USSR be characterized as colonies or neo-colonies of the Slavic areas; they have been rapidly and thoroughly integrated into the USSR while their native languages and cultures have thrived. Their living standards, educational opportunities, and welfare systems have been raised to those of the European USSR. Rather than being exploited by Russia, and their industrialization and all around economic development impeded, their economies have been rapidly industrialized and modernized, largely at the expense of heavy economic subsidies from the European areas. Natives of the Asiatic Republics predominate in the politically responsible positions. The absence of any significant signs of discontent with the Soviet system among Soviet Asians contrasts radically with nationalist and anti-imperialist movements across the Soviet borders in such countries as pre-1979 Iran, and is evidence of the lack of felt national oppression among Soviet Asians.

Even Soviet dissidents such as Roy Medvedev essentially concur with the opinions of all Western experts on Central Asia:

... the West exaggerates the importance of our nationalist movements. The Soviet authorities aren't misrepresenting the facts when they say that the national components of the old tsarist Russian empire... have experienced rapid change in both national-cultural and economic structures, and that they have profited enormously from the October revolution. In the past, the authorities put much effort into solving all kinds of regional issues; therefore I don't believe there's any danger of the USSR breaking up.<sup>113</sup>

All the evidence, based not only on statistics but also on the virtually



universal opinions of experts on Soviet Asia, points in the same direction. The Soviets have thoroughly transformed the old czarist imperialist relationship between Russia and Asia, and no longer does it bear the marks of a colonial or neo-colonial connection. Elsewhere, Western imperialism's exploitation and humiliations have resulted in independence movements. Only the Soviets have been able to integrate formerly backward, colonial areas into the old European heartland without the development of a nationalist separatist movement. In this respect Soviet socialism must thus be seen as radically different from Western capitalism.

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### 3. The European Nationalities in the USSR

In this chapter a careful examination is made of the condition of the non-Russian European Republics, and of the Soviet Jews. The rates of economic growth, industrialization, specialization in raw materials, and so on in the European Republics is scrutinized to detect any tendency for them to become colonial-like appendages of the Russian Republic. The status of their languages and cultures is also carefully examined for any 'Russification' attributes. The historical development of the association of each people first with Russia then with the USSR is treated. Finally, the degree of opposition to membership in the USSR, hostility to socialist institutions, and anti-Russian sentiment in the major areas is examined. Special attention is given to the position of Soviet Jews because of the publicity they have received in the West, and an analysis is made of accusations of anti-Semitism, as well as the recent Jewish emigration.

#### Economic Development

While the most rapid improvement in economic conditions, social welfare and cultural development has generally occurred in the Asian Republics of the USSR, the various European national minorities, especially those of the Baltic Republics and the Jews have achieved the highest level of economic development and social welfare in the entire USSR. The three Baltic Republics, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, are respectively the wealthiest of all Republics. In 1970, the average income in roubles per capita for the three Republics was 1,500 (US \$3,420 in 1974) – 13% higher than in the Russian Republic. The average income per capita for Georgia and Armenia was R897 (two-thirds of that of the Russian Republics); while the average for the Ukraine, Belorussia and Moldavia was R1,073 (80% of the Russian Republic). (see Table 2.1).

During pre-1917 Czarist rule, and its independence period before 1940, Lithuania was a relatively backward, largely agricultural economy.<sup>1</sup> Since it became part of the Soviet Union its rate of industrial output has been the most rapid of all the Republics, increasing 54 times between 1940 and 1978, compared to 20 times for the Soviet Union average and 17 times for



Russia proper.<sup>2</sup> In 1970, the third richest Republic, after only Estonia and Latvia – Lithuania – had its greatest growth in heavy industry. For example, gross production of electrical energy increased eight times between 1960 and 1970; chemical and oil refining more than 13 times; machine-building and metal-working six times; and the manufacture of construction materials four times. In that decade the proportion of all industrial workers employed in metal-working and machine building increased from 23% to 33%, while the proportion of workers in light industry decreased from 45% to 38%. With only 1.3% of the USSR's population, Lithuania, in 1970, produced 11% of all metal-cutting lathes, and also specialized in the production of machine tools and instruments, automated equipment, electronic computers, radio and television sets and refrigerators.<sup>3</sup> Lithuania's rapid industrialization during the Soviet period has been reflected in the standard of living of its people. In the 1960 to 1970 period it led all Soviet Republics in the rate of growth of national income.

In 1970, Latvia was second only to Estonia in living standards throughout the USSR.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to Lithuania, Latvia (especially its coastal region) was one of the most industrialized parts of the czarist empire, and its industrial working class played an important role in the movement against the czar. Much of Latvian industry was destroyed or dismantled during World War I and little reindustrialization occurred during the pre-1940 independence period. The policy of the independent Republic's government was to concentrate on the development of agricultural exports, but since 1940 Soviet policy has been to concentrate on the redevelopment of Latvian industry, and in the 1970s Latvia was the most industrialized of all the Soviet Republics with 38% of its labour force employed in industry in 1971, the highest figure in the Union. Between 1940 and 1978 industrial output grew 43 times (a rate of increase exceeded only by Lithuania and Moldavia). Latvian industry is concentrated on machine building and metal-working, which together employed 33% of the industrial labour force in 1970. With less than 1% of the population of the country, in the early 1970s Latvia produced more than half of all the motorcycles, almost half of all the telephones, one-third of the trolley cars, over a quarter of all railway passenger cars, and about a quarter of all radios and record players.

Estonia is the richest Republic of the USSR; its rate of industrialization has been the same as Latvia's. From 1940 to 1978 its industrial output increased 43 times.<sup>5</sup> As in the other two Baltic Republics heavy industry has been given priority, and Estonia leads the USSR in a number of high technology areas, such as the application of computers to various aspects of management.<sup>6</sup>

Over the entire 1913 to 1978 period Armenia led all Soviet Republics in rate of industrialization, with, in 1978, an industrial output 335 times higher than that in 1913 (compared to a 151 times increase for Russia proper). Georgia's rate of industrialization has also been rapid, with its industrial output in 1978 144 times higher than that for 1913 – slightly less than the Russian rate of industrial growth. In 1970, Armenia's national income per



adult was 87% of the Russian, while Georgia's was 69%.<sup>7</sup>

In 1970, Georgia ranked third among all the Union Republics in metallurgical production. It is a major producer of pig iron, steel and rolled metal. The machine building industry (especially metal-cutting lathes, motor vehicles, tractors, electric locomotives and agricultural machinery) as well as the chemical industry have been growing rapidly.<sup>8</sup>

Nonferrous metallurgy is one of the most important economic sectors of Armenia, and it processes much of its own mineral wealth of molybdenum, aluminium and rare metals. Metal-working and machine building employed over one-third of Armenia's industrial labour force in 1969. Recently the chemical industry has also become a major industrial sector. Armenia is also one of the most important Soviet centres for scientific research, and the production of calculators, measuring instruments employing semi-conductor electronics, and computers.<sup>9</sup>

The rates of industrialization in Moldavia and Belorussia during the period 1940 to 1978 were considerably more rapid than the Russian; in the Ukraine it was somewhat less.<sup>10</sup> The living standards in Ukraine, Belorussia and Moldavia rank just below Russia proper. Economically, in general, the European Republics have fared very well under Soviet power. Six of them have had a more rapid rate of industrialization than has Russia proper, and two of them less rapid; three of them are more developed than the Russian Republic, and five somewhat less developed. In general, there is no evidence that the economic relationship between the non-Russian European Republics and the Russian Republic is either exploitative, or of a type in which industrial production is concentrated in Russia. All the eight European national minority Republics appear to have derived considerable benefit from their association in the Soviet Union.

## **Health Care and Education**

The improvement in such basic social services as health care and education has also been very significant in the period of Soviet power. Georgia, Latvia and Estonia lead the Russian Republic in the number of doctors per 10,000 population, and in doctors per 10,000 adults. Of the other European major minorities only the Moldavians rank significantly below the Russian majority in this respect (see Table 2.3). There is little difference between the Republics either in hospital beds per 10,000 population or per 10,000 adults.

Of the eight major European minorities with their own Republics, both Georgia and Armenia have more students per capita in higher education than do the Russians, while the three Baltic nationalities average a ratio of about 80% that of the Russians, the Belorussians and Ukrainians about 70%, and the Moldavians a low 53% (see Table 2.6). The general rates of increase in school attendance are largely inversely proportional to the educational level before the Soviet system was instituted; Georgia, Armenia, Lithuania and Moldavia have had higher rates than Russia, while Estonia and Latvia have



had significantly lower rates (see Table 2.5).

Corresponding to their over-representation among university students, Armenia and Georgia have the highest concentration of scientific workers per capita of any of the major Soviet nationalities, except the Jews. The three Baltic nationalities rank just below the Russian over-representation index on this measure. Scientific workers, however, are somewhat under-represented among Ukrainians and Belorussians, while Moldavians have the lowest concentration of scientific workers of all Soviet nationalities. This reflects the underdeveloped state of this area before it was incorporated into the USSR in 1940, and the relatively short time that has elapsed since the institutionalization of Soviet power enabled the development of a body of scientific workers (see Table 2.7).

In summary, all the major European nationalities have made considerable progress in the basic social services; there is no observable tendency for Russians to receive preferential treatment in the development of such services. In general, the gap between the European minorities is closing, although Moldavia remains to some extent under-represented in institutions of higher education, and consequently in the number of scientific workers.

## Cultural Development

In the three Baltic Republics, and in Georgia and Armenia, the proportion of books and newspapers printed in the titular language roughly coincides with the percentage of nationals in the population, as Table 3.1 demonstrates.

Table 3.1

Books/Newspapers in the National Language in the Baltic Republics, Armenia and Georgia, compared to % of Nationals

	% <i>Book Titles</i>	% <i>Newspapers</i>	% of Nationals in <i>Total Population of the Republic</i>
Estonia	74%	72%	68%
Latvia	52%	64%	57%
Lithuania	64%	81%	80%
Armenia	75%	88%	89%
Georgia	73%	86%	67%

Source: Katz et al, 1975, *Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities*, pp. 459-60.

In the Ukraine, Belorussia and Moldavia, however, the proportion of books published in the titular language is significantly smaller than the



extent of these nationalities in the Republic's population; but except in Moldavia, the proportion of newspapers published in the native language is proportional to the nationality's share of the population (see Table 2.8). The smaller proportion of books published in Ukrainian and Belorussian is as a result of the similarity of these languages to Great Russian, and the consequent ease of access these nationalities have to the wide corpus of works available in Russian.

The proportion of titles and newspapers to population in the minority European Republics is reflected in the ratios of total numbers of copies printed to population. In Estonia in 1971 seven newspapers were printed in Russian with a mean run of 18,000 copies. Twenty-seven newspapers were published in Estonian with an average run of 33,000 copies. In Lithuania, 12 newspapers were printed in Russian with a mean run of 13,000 copies, while 72 were printed in Lithuanian with a mean run of 22,000 copies. In Armenia, three papers were printed in Russian and 61 in Armenian; both had an average run of 19,000 copies. In the Ukraine the average run of the 863 Ukrainian newspapers was only slightly less than the 357 Russian language papers.

Similarly for books published. In Estonia the 1,505 book titles published in Estonian in 1971 had an average run of 7,000 copies, while the 674 Russian language titles had an average run of 3,000. In Lithuania the 1,351 Lithuanian language titles had an average run of 9,000 while the 421 Russian language books had an average run of 4,000. In Armenia, the 840 Armenian language titles had an average run of 10,000 each, while those in Russian averaged 7,000. In the Ukraine, the average run of the 3,106 Ukrainian titles published was four times that of the Russian language books.<sup>11</sup>

In numbers of books published per capita in the native languages of the Republics Estonia, with 8.9 per year per capita, followed by Latvia with 7.4, lead the entire Soviet Union. The Russian average is 5.6, Lithuania and Georgia also rank pretty high in this regard with 4.3 and 3.7 per capita per year respectively (see Table 2.8).

The native languages thrive in all the European Republics, with the possible exception of Belorussia. Only 80% of Belorussians in 1970 identified Belorussian as their native tongue. Ninety-eight percent of Georgians and Lithuanians identified their national language as their mother tongue, as did 96% of Estonians, 95% of Latvians and Moldavians, 91% of Armenians and 86% of Ukrainians (see Table 2.9). Except possibly in Belorussia there is no tendency for the native languages to fall into disuse and be replaced by Great Russian.

The proportion of the population of some European Republics who are of the titular nationality does tend to decline, in contrast to the universal pattern for the Asian Republics. This decline is most pronounced in Estonia where, in 1959, 75%, and in 1979, 65% of the population were Estonians. The only other Soviet Republic where a similar decline can be observed is Latvia, where, in 1959, 62% were Latvian, and in 1979, 54%. The proportion of Ukrainians in the Ukraine also declined slightly, from 77% to 74%, as did



that of Belorussians in Belorussia (81% to 79%). Lithuania actually experienced an increase (from 79% to 80%), as did Armenia (from 88% to 90%) and Georgia (from 64% to 69%) (see Table 2.10).

In general, the linguistic and cultural integrity of the European nationalities is being maintained; their cultures, art and literature thrive and show no sign of being submerged into a homogeneous Russian culture.

## Nationalism and Dissidence in the European Republics

The two Soviet Republics with the greatest manifestations of nationalism and anti-Russian (if not also anti-Soviet) sentiments are Lithuania and Estonia, in that order. Both Republics were briefly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940–41, under somewhat controversial conditions, and were permanently incorporated after the nazis were driven out in 1944. There was some guerrilla warfare/terrorism for about five years after the war in both Republics involving groups opposed to integration into the Soviet Union. Considerable resentment on the part of a significant number of the people in both countries has lingered on. In the 1970s these sentiments were manifested in occasional anti-Russian (not anti-socialist, or usually not anti-Soviet) nationalist manifestations, especially in Lithuania. By all indications the Soviet system is least popular in these two Republics.

### Estonia

In early October 1980, a nationalist demonstration, estimated by Westerners to be composed of about 2,000 high school students, occurred in the Estonia capital directed against the growing Russian immigration into Estonia — possibly with anti-Soviet overtones as well.<sup>12</sup> In 1972, several hundred Tallin Polytechnic students rioted after the Czechs beat the Soviets in an ice-hockey match shouting 'We won'. Dissidents protesting against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia have been arrested.<sup>13</sup> In Estonia, as in Poland and Hungary, anti-Russian — and often racist — jokes are popular. Such jokes tend to make fun of Russians for their alleged lack of culture and sophistication. Students sometimes chant unorthodox slogans at officially organized demonstrations. It is reported that in Estonia there was significant support for New Leftist ideas among the youth, at least in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Other manifestations of anti-authority sentiments among the young have included the popularity of wearing crosses around the neck, as well as other, Western paraphernalia.<sup>14</sup> In 1974, two *samizdat* reached the West, addressed to the UN Secretary-General and signed the 'Estonian National Front' and the 'Estonian National Movement', which called for the secession of Estonia from the USSR. Four people were arrested in December 1974 for releasing these statements to the Western press.<sup>15</sup> Estonian song festivals are especially popular, one in 1969 was attended by 250,000 people. It is reported that at such festivals Finnish choruses (Estonian is rather closely related to the Finnish language) are applauded enthusiastically, while Russian



choruses are applauded only politely, allegedly this is a sign of Estonian nationalism and anti-Russian feeling.<sup>16</sup>

It seems that significant numbers of Estonians principally object to increasing Russian influence in their Republic, and especially the increasing settlement of Russians.<sup>17</sup> While there is some sentiment in favour of secession from the Soviet Union, this does not reflect majority opinion. There is little or no evidence of any significant inclination to replace socialism with capitalism, despite significant dissent about the particular forms of Soviet institutions existent today. The benefits to Estonia of being part of the Soviet Union have proved to be immense. Anthony Asrakhand, former Moscow correspondent for the *Washington Post*, wrote in 1970, 'Nationalism in Estonia and neighbouring Latvia is easy for a visitor to sense, but hard to document. What you see with your eyes is more a wish for cultural autonomy than a plan or dream of seceding from the Soviet Union.'<sup>18</sup>

Since the 13th Century Estonia had been dominated by German land-owners and merchants, and although it was conquered by the Russian Empire in 1710, the German speaking aristocracy maintained their dominant position until the mid-19th Century. It was in the latter part of the 19th Century that a sense of national consciousness first developed. The new Estonian nationalist movement demanded a voice in local administration and envisaged Estonia as an autonomous unit within a more loosely federated Greater Russia; there was no significant movement for independence until after the 1917 Revolution. Initially, there was strong support for the Bolsheviks within Estonia, as was indicated in the 1917 elections for the Constituent Assembly by the Communist vote of 37%, compared to a national average of about 25% of the total. In reaction to the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917 the local propertied groups in Estonia opted for independence, which was declared early in 1918. After two years of civil war, in which the anti-Communists received considerable material support from the Western powers, independence was confirmed, establishing Estonia as a capitalist economy with parliamentary political forms.

The strong Estonian Communist Party was banned in 1924 and its leaders arrested and imprisoned until 1938. Parliamentary forms, however, were maintained in Estonia for longer than in the remainder of capitalist Eastern and Central Europe. Not until 1934 were these abolished in favour of an anti-Soviet, rightist dictatorship. In 1939, with the USSR increasingly afraid of a German invasion, the Estonian government (in common with the governments of Latvia and Lithuania) was forced to sign a treaty of mutual assistance. This treaty permitted Soviet troops to be stationed on Estonian soil. The Soviets, after protesting that the rightist government was not honouring the terms of the treaty, insisted on holding elections which were manipulated in such a way as to guarantee victory for the Communist dominated list – in all three Baltic Republics. In August 1940, the new Communist-led Estonian government asked for incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union as a Union Republic.<sup>14</sup>

There was considerable resistance to the socialist transformation of the



Estonian economy and the political integration of the nation with the Soviet Union; and resistance to collectivization on the part of landowners, rich peasants and businessmen. The suppression of this opposition may have resulted in the execution of up to 2,000 people and the deportation of about 19,000 people to Siberia. In 1941 a significant segment of Estonian society, especially the former privileged and wealthy classes, welcomed the Nazi invaders as liberators. It is estimated that during World War II about 25,000 Estonians in German organized military units were killed fighting the Soviets. About 6% of the population, comprising many German collaborators and members of the formerly privileged classes, fled with the retreating German army in 1944. With the restoration of Soviet power in 1944, the number of people deported to Siberia as collaborators has been assessed at perhaps 30,000.<sup>20</sup> The Sovietization of Estonia and its incorporation into the USSR was not a gentle process, and some bitterness remains among significant segments of the population, especially those in the middle classes.

### **Lithuania**

The greatest manifestations of political discontent have occurred in Lithuania. Zhor es Medvedev, a prominent dissident in exile, reports that nationalism is much stronger in Lithuania than in Estonia.<sup>21</sup> The bulk of the nationalist opposition movement has been centred around the Catholic Church. In 1968, the Catholic clergy initiated a campaign of petitioning against such restrictions on the Church as limits imposed on new admissions to the Catholic seminary. Two priests were arrested, one in 1970 and another in 1971, for violating the law against imparting religious training to children. At the trial of one, a riot broke out involving about 500 people; the priest was sentenced to one year in gaol. From 1971 to 1973, as a result of these trials, a campaign of mass petitions took place which collected 60,000 signatures.

A number of clandestine nationalist/religious groups of intellectuals and students were formed during the late 1960s. An underground *samizdat* journal, the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*, began to appear early in the 1970s; by February 1977, 24 issues had reached the West. In May 1972, a 19-year-old youth who had expressed interest in attending the religious seminary burned himself alive in Kaunas. His funeral precipitated a riot involving clashes with the police, and a number of fires. An estimated 200 rioters were held in gaol for at least 15 days. There were two further self-immolations by fire in 1972. Up to 1975, of the three known attempts to hijack planes in the USSR, two (including the only successful one) have involved Lithuanians.<sup>22</sup> Anti-Russian protest in Lithuania has also taken the form of refusals to speak Russian, defections to the West, a fairly well organized dissident network, petition campaigns, and a riot after a Lithuanian-Russian soccer game in 1977.<sup>23</sup> The relatively strong nationalist movement in Lithuania contrasts sharply with the absence of such movements in Soviet Asia.

The thrust of most Lithuanian protests is for greater autonomy for the Catholic Church. In the opinion of most Western experts the opposition



movement in Lithuania would subside to the extent that the Church was left alone. Nevertheless, it seems that national pride is strong, especially among young people, and the desire for greater autonomy, as opposed to secession from the USSR, or hostility to socialism, is a potent force. Lithuanians are, on the whole, proud of their history and culture, and their ties with the West.<sup>24</sup>

As in Estonia (or, for that matter, Georgia) there is a significant anti-Russian sentiment in Lithuania, with strong overtones of racist arrogance toward a people whom they consider to be culturally inferior. But hostility towards Russians, in both Lithuania and Estonia, is reported to be of a rather abstract quality directed towards Russians in general and not so much to individual Russians. Indeed, it is quite common for Estonians or Lithuanians to feel very close to individual Russians while at the same time telling anti-Russian jokes.<sup>25</sup> That anti-Russian feelings are based on nationalist traditions, rather than on any contemporary oppression by Russians, is borne out by analyses of the attitudes of Lithuanian emigrants in the West, who report that their fellow nationals in Lithuania have equal chances for important jobs and official honours with ethnic Russians. They also report that systematic favouritism towards Russians or discrimination against Lithuanians is non-existent.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike Estonia, Latvia, the Ukraine, Belorussia or Moldavia, at one time Lithuania was an important independent state, both on its own and in union with Poland. Nationalist sentiments, including the re-establishment of national independence, have been active since Lithuania was forcibly integrated into the czarist empire in the late 18th Century. After the collapse of czarism these sentiments exploded in an independence movement. In contrast the movements for Estonian and Latvian independence were created after the 1917 Revolution; in Estonia, nationalist sentiment had traditionally been directed toward achieving autonomous status in a federal Greater Russia.<sup>27</sup>

Unlike Latvia, which was highly industrialized in the czarist period, with a strong socialist working class movement, heavily rural Lithuania had only a small working class and little in the way of a revolutionary socialist movement. Although Vilnius (the traditional capital) was a centre of the Jewish Bund, the Polish Socialist Party and the Lithuanian Social Democrats were based largely among intellectuals.<sup>28</sup>

The Red Army took Vilnius in January 1919 and proclaimed a Soviet regime; a civil war with anti-Communist nationalists based in Kaunas then followed. Because of considerable financial and material assistance for the nationalists from Western countries, together with the ultra-left policies of the Bolsheviks, who alienated the bulk of the peasantry with premature collectivization, the Bolsheviks lost. Consequently, an independent, non-socialist Lithuania was established, whose government was consistently hostile to the Soviet Union, and pro-Western.<sup>29</sup> Parliamentary forms functioned in the new Lithuanian Republic until 1926 when, after a victory of a Socialist-Populist coalition, there was a military coup, and a rightist



dictatorship was established.

The Lithuanian dictator, Antanas Smetona, was an admirer of Mussolini. His dictatorship was weakened when it was forced to cede Lithuania's principal seaport, Klaipeda (Memel), to Germany in March 1939. As we have seen (p. 78) at the outbreak of World War II the imminent threat this represented to Soviet security prompted the Soviets to issue ultimatums to all three Baltic States requiring them to sign 'mutual assistance pacts'. In 1940, in Lithuania, as in Estonia and Latvia, the Soviets maintained that the government was failing to observe the terms of the pact and insisted on holding elections, which were manipulated similarly to those in Estonia. The new Communist-led government which resulted from this election demanded the formal incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union as a Union Republic.

Initially, this had a significant degree of support, not only from the Lithuanian left, but also from many nationalists, owing to the reincorporation into the Republic of the historical Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, which for the previous 20 years had been occupied by Poland. The process of Sovietization in 1940 and 1941, however, generated considerable opposition, especially among the peasantry and middle classes. When the nazis invaded, in June 1941, there was an anti-Soviet, nationalist-led uprising in Lithuania which took control of the majority of cities before the German army arrived. Spurned by the nazis, whom many had first welcomed as liberators, the Lithuanian nationalists turned to guerrilla warfare against the Germans – warfare that was turned against the Red army after liberation from the Germans in 1944.<sup>30</sup>

Although the bulk of resistance was dissipated within two or three years, scattered armed action against the Soviet system continued in Lithuania until 1953. It is estimated that in eight years about 40,000 people (more or less evenly divided between pro- and anti-Soviet forces) were killed (mostly in 1944 and 1945). Except perhaps in the formerly Polish western Ukraine, which was integrated into the USSR at approximately the same time, the length and scope of the fighting against Soviet power was equalled only by the Basmachi resistance in Central Asia in the early 1920s.<sup>31</sup>

The Soviet system seems to have achieved basic legitimacy in Lithuania by the mid-1950s, largely owing to the remarkable economic progress and rapid rise in living standards consequent upon incorporation into the Soviet Union. The local Lithuanian Communist Party leadership was given substantial autonomy from Moscow, and the local language, culture, art and so on, has thrived.<sup>32</sup> The extent of resistance to incorporation into the Soviet Union throughout the early 1950s, and the level of ongoing dissident activity, is undoubtedly related to both the strong nationalist traditions of Lithuania and the overt presence of the Roman Catholic Church, which – as in Poland – acts as a counter institution to express discontent with various specific practices of the regime.

### **Latvia**

Latvia, in common with Estonia but unlike Lithuania, had no history as an



independent entity before the Bolshevik revolution. A number of small, independent and autonomous states, which did not encompass all of Latvia, had existed on Latvian territory, but for most of the period between the 13th and 18th Century Latvia was divided up by the great powers in the area, including Germany, Poland and Sweden. During this time, the ruling class consisted of German nobles, as in Estonia. Between 1721 and 1795 Latvia was incorporated piecemeal into the Czarist Empire. The first Latvian nationalist movement grew up among young intellectuals in the latter part of the 19th Century.

Latvia, as we have noted (p. 80), was heavily industrialized under the czars with a strong working class, out of which an effective working-class, socialist movement grew up. In 1904, the Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party was established, and in late 1905 claimed 14,000 members. Latvian workers played a central role in the 1905 Russian Revolution with the ratio of strikers to workers at that time higher in Latvia than in any other part of the Czarist empire. Socialist, as well as nationalist, sentiments remained strong after the suppression of the 1905 Revolution, and again exploded in 1917. As in Lithuania, the German advance in the spring of 1918 overran the country and eliminated Soviet power, and under German protection a provisional anti-Soviet government was set up in Riga. With the withdrawal of German troops in 1919 Latvian units of the Red Army (The Latvian Rifles) re-entered Latvia and a revolutionary civil war commenced with the anti-Socialist nationalist forces. As in Lithuania and Estonia, money and supplies from the West (as well as troops from Estonia) proved decisive, and anti-Soviet forces achieved victory early in 1920.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the strong revolutionary traditions of the Latvian working class the pro-Bolshevik forces enjoyed considerably more support in Latvia than in either Lithuania or Estonia, and as a result the popular resistance to the Western supported White army and regime was greater here than elsewhere in the Baltics. In 1920, many revolutionary Latvians fled the White army victory to seek refuge in the Soviet Union. The Red Latvian Rifles were one of the most reliable military units available to the Bolsheviks, and played an important role in many civil war battles from the Ukraine to Siberia.<sup>34</sup> Latvian revolutionaries played a disproportionately significant role in the building of the Soviet Union in the 1920s.

Independent, capitalist Latvia, in common with Estonia and Lithuania, began with parliamentary forms, which were overthrown in 1934 when an authoritarian regime, loosely modelled on Mussolini's Italy, was set up. Leftist leaders were gaoled and leftist political parties banned. As in the other Baltic countries, in 1939 the Soviet Army entered Latvia in order to increase Soviet security against a possible German invasion; in June 1940, under Soviet pressure, the rightist regime was forced to resign, a new Communist supported regime was elected and almost immediately requested integration into the Soviet Union as a Union Republic. Rapid Sovietization began, only to be halted by the nazi occupation in summer 1941; many who resisted Sovietization in 1940-41, as well as those who collaborated with the nazis



during the German occupation, were deported to Siberia.<sup>35</sup>

In Latvia, resistance to Sovietization, as well as collaboration with the nazis, was less common than in either Estonia or Lithuania. This, along with relatively minor manifestations of nationalist dissent in comparison with the other two Baltic States, reflects the long socialist traditions of the Latvian working class and the history of strong pro-Bolshevik sentiments among many Latvians. In strong contrast to her sister Baltic Republics evidence of demonstrations or *samizdat* against Soviet power for more autonomy, or against Russian influence, are quite rare and there seem to be no popular feelings favouring a secession from the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup>

### **Ukraine**

Until the 14th Century there were a number of small principalities on Ukrainian territory, but from the end of that century the Ukraine was gradually annexed by Lithuania and Poland, and by 1569 it had all been absorbed into the joint Lithuanian-Polish state. In 1648, there was a popular rebellion against Polish rule, which sent the Ukrainians to Moscow for help, and in 1667, the Ukraine was partitioned between Russia and Poland. When Russia absorbed most of Poland in the latter part of the 18th Century the Ukraine, with the exception of Western Galicia (incorporated into Austria), was absorbed into the Czarist Empire.

Before World War I only a weak nationalist movement had existed in the Russian Ukraine. The weakness of nationalist sentiment became apparent in 1917 when the Russian Provisional Government granted autonomy to the Ukraine but nationalists there were unable to establish either an effective army or political administration. In January 1918, shortly after the Bolshevik seizure of power, the autonomous Ukrainian government, weak though it was, declared independence. The following month this government signed a peace treaty with the Germans and Austrians, whose troops then entered the Ukraine expelling the Red Army. With the withdrawal of the German and Austrian armies, in 1919 the Ukrainian nationalist government was unable to generate much popular support, again failing to establish either an effective administration or army. In 1919 and 1920 a multi-sided civil war raged among right-wing White armies, the moderately leftist nationalist government, Anarchist groups, the Red Army, and an invading Polish army, equipped by the Western powers, which attempted to re-establish Polish domination of the Ukraine. In 1920, the nationalist government, by then in exile in Poland, agreed to cede the western third of the Ukraine to Poland in return for Polish help in defeating the Red Army in the rest of the Ukraine. But the Polish army in the eastern Ukraine was beaten, and a peace treaty signed between the Polish state and Soviet Russia in 1921 ceded the western part of the Ukraine to Poland; the eastern two-thirds were incorporated into the Soviet Union as one of its four original constituent republics in 1922.<sup>37</sup>

The new Soviet Ukrainian Republic enjoyed considerable autonomy and cultural development. In the 1930s, some opposition to Soviet rule developed, especially among the peasantry who were undergoing collectivization. There



is, however, little evidence to suggest that such opposition was significantly greater among peasants in the Soviet Ukraine than elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, in the western third of the Ukraine, Ukrainian nationalism grew in opposition to repressive Polish rule. Polish landlords exploited the Ukrainian peasantry and the Polish Ukraine was not granted the autonomy initially promised. The organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), founded in 1929, carried on a campaign of assassinations and sabotage against the Polish government. The OUN's ideology was explicitly fascist, and it eventually proposed an independent and united Ukraine within Hitler's 'New European Order'. In order to prevent it falling into the hands of the advancing German Armies, which had just conquered Poland proper, the Western Ukraine was occupied by the Soviet Union in August 1939. The former Polish Ukraine was immediately reincorporated into the existing Soviet Ukrainian Republic. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, however, continued its campaign of assassinations and sabotage, now against the expanded Soviet regime in the Western Ukraine. In June 1941, they welcomed the nazi invasion but soon became disillusioned when the Germans refused any form of co-operation with them. During the war, organized Ukrainian nationalist organizations fought both the Germans and the Soviets in the Western Ukraine, and, although the bulk of OUN resistance was suppressed in 1944 and 1945, armed actions on the part of rightist Ukrainian nationalists there did not end completely until the early 1950s.<sup>38</sup>

Except in the Western Ukraine, which was not incorporated into the USSR until 1939, there has been very little history of anti-Soviet or anti-Russian nationalism. In this respect the Ukraine thus differs significantly from Estonia and Lithuania. There has, however, been some history of nationalist dissidence in the Ukraine on a level more or less comparable to that of Latvia. A small group, which considered itself to be the continuation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the 'Ukrainian National Front' was established in 1964. Before being suppressed, it published a *samizdat* in 1965-66 advocating resistance to Soviet rule. From 1965-72 a campaign against anti-Soviet pro-Ukrainian nationalism among intellectuals resulted in the arrest of a number of them for anti-Soviet activity.<sup>39</sup>

In general, the Soviet system appears to enjoy a very high level of legitimacy in the Ukraine, along with little reported hostility to Russians. However, in the western third of the Ukraine, where armed resistance to incorporation into the Soviet Ukraine continued until the early 1950s, there are still remnants of anti-Soviet sentiment, although this appears to be no longer a significant force. Nevertheless, the Ukrainians generally retain a sense of national identity and pride in their distinctive language, history and culture.<sup>40</sup>

### **Belorussia**

There is virtually no evidence of anti-Soviet, anti-Socialist, anti-Russian or even strongly popular nationalist sentiments or manifestations in Belorussia;



the Soviet system, in fact, seems to enjoy an especially high level of legitimacy.<sup>41</sup>

From the 13th Century to the latter part of the 18th Century what today is Belorussia was part of Lithuania; and part of the joint Lithuanian-Polish Kingdom from 1569. At the partition of Poland, in the latter part of the 18th Century, it was incorporated into the Czarist Empire. Belorussia has no history as an independent entity, its nobility adopted both the religion (Catholicism) and language of Poland. Polish landlords and merchants dominated the area throughout the Bolshevik revolution.<sup>42</sup> There were, however, stirrings of a Belorussian nationalism in the latter half of the 19th Century.

The Peace Treaty between Poland and Soviet Russia in 1921 ceded the western part of Belorussia to Poland. In 1922, the bulk of Belorussia became one of the four original constituent Republics of the USSR.<sup>43</sup> In 1939, the western part was reincorporated into the Belorussian Soviet Republic after the Red Army's occupation of the eastern part of the Polish state.

### **Armenia**

The first unified Armenian state came into existence in 190 BC, and reached the height of its power in the early years of the first century BC, but in 55 BC Armenia came under Roman hegemony. Armenia later became an integral part of the Byzantine Empire; many Byzantine emperors were, in fact, Armenian. With the decline of the Empire, Armenia experienced a succession of principalities and states. It became a battleground for the Persians and Ottoman Turks who finally divided it between them in 1639. In 1828, the Russian Czar conquered the Persian half of Armenia (the present Soviet Republic of Armenia) and, although Armenians generally welcomed the Russian conquest, seeing it as protection against the Persians and Turks, they vigorously resisted Russification. Armenia has a very long history as a nation and Armenians have long had a very strong sense of nationalism.

In the 1918-20 period during the Russian Civil War, a nationalist anti-Communist Party formed the government of an independent Eastern Armenia. The young Soviet government had been forced to cede the entire Transcaucasus area to Germany in the treaty of Brest Litovsk which secured peace between Russia and Germany. After 1918, in the wake of the German collapse, Britain and France did their best to encourage an independent non-Socialist Armenia. In December 1920, the Red Army entered Armenia in support of the Armenian Soviet Republic which had been proclaimed by leftists the previous month. Given the immediate threat of a revitalized Turkey (one and a half million Armenians, most of the population of Western Armenia just across the border, had been massacred five years before) the re-establishment of the temporarily broken tie with Russia was generally welcomed, even by many not otherwise sympathetic to the Soviet system. When the Red Army entered Armenia in 1920, a Turkish Army was present in the country preparing for an attack on Yerevan, the capital. Reincorporation into Soviet Russia was welcomed by the vast majority of Armenians at this time since it secured the immediate withdrawal of the invading Turkish Army.<sup>44</sup>



In 1922, as part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federation, along with Georgia and Azerbaidzhan, Armenia became one of the four constituent Republics of the new USSR. In 1936, the Federation was dissolved and Armenia became a separate Union Republic.<sup>45</sup>

Although Armenian nationalism remains strong there is no particular evidence of anti-Soviet sentiment, neither has there been any manifestation of popular desire to withdraw from the USSR (unlike that among some Estonians and Lithuanians). No challenge to basic socialist institutions is apparent, neither is any special resentment, or sense of superiority, towards Russians (as there is among Georgians and Estonians). Expressions of Armenian nationalism during the Soviet period have been directed against the Turks (because of the 1915 massacre) and the Azeris (an Islamic Turkish people) who have been migrating into Armenia. The 50th anniversary of the 1915 Turkish massacre, on 24 April 1965, witnessed spontaneous, violently anti-Turkish outbreaks in Yerevan, the Armenian capital.<sup>46</sup> The economic and cultural accomplishments of Soviet Armenia are attested to by the pride with which they are regarded by the vigorously anti-Soviet Armenian nationalist party among overseas Armenians, the Dashnaksutjun – the governing party in the 1918–20 interim.<sup>47</sup>

### **Georgia**

Georgia's history as a nation is even longer than Armenia's. The first Georgian state was created in the 5th Century BC, and, like the Armenians, throughout most of their history the Georgians have been dominated by one or another of the great empires of the region. Rome, Byzantium, the Arabs, the Moguls, the Persians, the Ottoman Turks and the Russians have all ruled Georgia, but throughout their long period of domination Georgians have maintained a strong sense of national identity.

From the end of the 9th to the middle of the 13th Century and for brief periods in the 15th and 16th Centuries Georgia was, however, an independent kingdom, but for most of the period between the 13th and 18th Centuries it was part of the Turkish and/or Persian Empires; independence was re-established in the middle of the 18th Century. In 1782, the Georgian King asked the Russian Czar for protection against Persian reconquest. In 1801, part of Georgia was annexed to Czarist Russia, and the rest was gradually incorporated in the course of the 19th Century as a result of continuing Russian victories over Turkey. As in Armenia, incorporation into the Russian Empire was welcomed, being seen as a protection against domination by Persians and Turks.<sup>48</sup>

Georgian nationalism was revitalized in the latter part of the 19th Century. Like Estonian nationalism, Georgian nationalism traditionally aimed for autonomy rather than independence.<sup>49</sup> From its beginnings, modern Georgian nationalism was fused with Marxism. In the first Russian Duma (following the 1905 Revolution) six of the seven Georgian deputies were Marxists; however, when the Marxist Social Democratic Party split, the majority of Georgian deputies became Mensheviks.



In May 1918, after Germany had forced the new Soviet Russian government to renounce sovereignty over the Transcaucasus region, Georgian Mensheviks formed an independent Georgian government, first in alliance with, and under the protection of, Germany, and after her collapse, with Britain. These powers, in turn, financed and armed the independent Menshevik regime in its attempt to maintain independence from Soviet Russia. At the beginning of 1921 the Bolsheviks led a local insurrection, aided, in February, by the Red Army, whereupon the Menshevik government fled to Western Europe. The reintegration of Georgia with Soviet Russia was generally welcomed.<sup>50</sup>

The Soviet system is very popular in Georgia although anti-Russian prejudice, somewhat similar to the Estonian sense of superiority, is common. It could, perhaps, be said that the Soviet system is even more popular in Georgia than it is in Russia, and that essentially complaints converge upon a desire for the entire country, once again, to be run by a Georgian. Joseph Stalin, who remains very popular, is Georgia's most famous native son. Visitors find it difficult to resist the insistence upon them visiting Gori, Stalin's birthplace. In 1956, riots broke out in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, in protest against the 'destalinization' campaign.<sup>51</sup>

Georgians remain fiercely proud of their culture, language and heritage, and guard it in an almost paranoid fashion. In 1978, a new Georgian Constitution was drafted, which omitted the old clause declaring Georgian as the official language of the Republic. By all indications this omission was owing to the fact that the Georgian language was so firmly established in the Republic, to declare it to be the official language seemed to be an anachronism. Nevertheless, on 14 April 1978, 5,000, mostly young, people marched from the University to the building that houses the Georgian Council of Ministers and demanded the inclusion of the clause in the Constitution; it was reinserted into the draft Constitution the next day. The traditional language clause was also reinserted into the Armenian and Azerbaidzhani draft Constitutions at the same time.<sup>52</sup> Although there are many other stories of the Georgians' insistence on priority for their language, and of their attitudes of superiority to the Russians, there is no real evidence of any significant anti-Socialist or anti-Soviet attitudes.

### **Party Membership in the European Minority Republics**

Georgians have the highest ratio of Party members to population of any of the major Soviet nationalities; the Armenians too, have a ratio above the Union average. Ukrainians and Belorussians are slightly below the Union average; Estonians and Latvians average about 72% of the Union average, and, in 1972, Lithuanians stood at 58%. Moldavians had the lowest ratio (36%) of any major Soviet nationality (Table 2.11). Thus the Party seems especially popular and important in Georgia and Armenia, and somewhat less influential in Lithuania and Moldavia.

In general, the various European minority republics have done quite well in the Soviet system. Their economies, cultures and languages have all



prospered. Only in Estonia and Lithuania has there been significant anti-Soviet manifestations, and even here the Soviet system has obtained a considerable degree of legitimacy. The Estonians' complaint is largely directed to the influx of Russians and their fear of being submerged into a greater Russian culture, while the Lithuanians' complaint focuses primarily on restrictions placed upon their Church. Only in these two Republics could a credible claim perhaps be made that a plebiscite to secede from the Soviet Union would have any chance of success. In the rest of the country, above all in Central Asia, the system has a very high level of legitimacy.

## **The Jewish People in the USSR**

During the Czarist period the Jewish people, largely confined by imperialist edict to the western part of the Russian Empire (i.e. 'the Pale') (Poland, the Baltic states, the Ukraine and Belorussia) suffered vicious anti-Semitism. Beginning in the last decades of the 19th Century, the Czarist government sponsored violent pogroms against the Jewish people during times of crisis, making them the scapegoat for economic and political problems, and thereby deflecting criticism from itself. Jews were systematically excluded from privileged positions, and many were driven out of the country by discrimination and pogroms in the generation before the 1917 Revolution, large numbers of whom settled in the USA.

Immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution expressions of anti-Semitism became a crime. In July 1918, the Council of People's Commissars called for the destruction of 'the anti-Semitic movement at its roots' by forbidding 'pogromists and persons inciting to pogroms'.<sup>53</sup> In 1922, the Russian Criminal Code forbade 'agitation and propaganda arousing national enmities and dissensions' and specified a minimum sentence of one year's solitary confinement (and 'death in time of war') as punishment. In 1927, the Russian Republic passed legislation outlawing the dissemination, manufacture or possession of literature calculated to stir national and religious hostility. Article 74 of the Russian Criminal Code, which came into effect in 1961, reads, 'Propaganda or agitation aimed at inciting racial or national enmity or discord . . . is punishable by loss of personal freedom for a period of six months to three years, or exile from two to five years.'<sup>54</sup> During the Civil War and throughout the 1920s there was an active official government campaign against anti-Semitism, incidents involving, and actions taken against, were frequently reported in the Soviet press. In this period the Party published over 100 books and brochures opposing anti-Semitism.<sup>55</sup>

Jewish intellectuals and workers were disproportionately active in the revolutionary movement in the Russian Empire. In 1922, Jews represented 5.2% of Communist Party membership (about five times their percentage of the population). From the late 1920s through to World War II the proportion of Jews in the Party was about 4.3%.<sup>56</sup> During the Civil War large numbers of non-Marxist Jews rallied to the Bolsheviks, the only major non anti-



Semitic organized force. The White Armies and their allies systematically promoted pogroms and other forms of anti-Semitism as part of their campaign to defeat the revolution. Many of the top Party leaders were Jews, e.g. Kamenev, Trotsky and Zinoviev (members of Lenin's leadership); Kaganovich and Litvinov (members of Stalin's leadership).

After the Soviet régime had removed all the traditional Czarist restrictions on Jews, they eagerly took advantage of the new educational, economic and social activities opened to them. As a result both of the elimination of traditional barriers and the general leftist mobilization in which most Jews participated, large numbers gave up their traditional ways, and became part of the mainstream of the newly emerging Soviet society. The majority of the young generation of Jews became alienated from both the religion and the cultural practices of their parents. As a measure of the rapid integration of Jews into Soviet society, intermarriage, which was extremely rare before the Revolution, became quite common.<sup>57</sup> In the 25 years after the revolution, traditional Jewish life was revolutionized as the Communist Party organized new organizations to impart a socialist content to Jewish culture.

Special 'Jewish national districts' for Jewish settlement were set aside in the south of Russia, the Ukraine and Crimea.<sup>58</sup> In 1928, an autonomous Jewish Republic was established within the Russian Republic of Birobidzhan, on the border of Manchuria. This was meant not only as a 'Jewish homeland', but as a means of encouraging development of an undeveloped area of the East. Birobidzhan was officially proclaimed an autonomous region in 1934, and although it has attracted relatively few Jewish settlers, it continues to exist as a Jewish Autonomous Republic.<sup>59</sup>

Jewish culture, within a socialist rather than a religious or Zionist context, thrived in the 1920s and 1930s. Both the Ukrainian and Belorussian Academy of Sciences included Jewish sections which were described as 'a laboratory of scientific thought in the field of Jewish culture'. These institutions focused on the history of the revolutionary movement among Jews and the social and economic condition of their people. In 1919, a Jewish State Theatre was established in Moscow, and by 1934 a further 18 had been established in other cities. Jewish theatre, as well as other expressions of Jewish culture, was strongly supported by the Soviet state. In 1932, 653 Yiddish books were published with a total circulation of more than 2.5 million (an average run of about 4,000 copies). In 1935, there were Yiddish dailies in Moscow, Kharkov, Minsk and Birobidzhan; in the Ukraine alone ten Jewish dailies were in circulation. During the mass hysteria of the Great Purge Trials (1936-38), essentially caused by the paranoid fear of Japanese and German invasion (see Chapter 8), many Yiddish cultural institutions, along with many other institutions in Soviet society, were temporarily closed down, to be largely revived during World War II.<sup>60</sup>

During World War II a Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was set up in the Soviet Union, to help mobilize both Soviet and non-Soviet Jews against Fascism, and to encourage the development of a socialist oriented Jewish culture. Jews were given priority in evacuation from areas about to be



overrun by the Nazi invaders. Virtually all Polish Jews who survived the holocaust (250,000) survived by fleeing to the Soviet Union and being evacuated East. In the immediate post-World War II period, Yiddish culture thrived in the USSR. The Jewish State Theatre continued to prosper in Moscow; a tri-weekly paper, *Aynikayt*, was published, also in Moscow; between 1946 and 1948 110 books were published in Yiddish. The Soviet Union was the first country to accord diplomatic recognition to Israel.<sup>61</sup>

In 1948, with the onset of the Cold War, the paranoid atmosphere characteristic of the late 1930s returned to the USSR. There were a number of official accusations that some politically prominent, professional Soviet Jews were involved in 'cosmopolitan', pro-Western or Zionist (anti-Socialist nationalist) plotting against the Soviet state. The hysterical atmosphere of the 1948-53 period was induced by fear of another attack, this time by the US and its NATO allies.\* There was a tendency to identify most manifestations of Jewish nationalism with 'cosmopolitanism', 'Zionism' and pro-imperialism during these years, in good part owing to the new state of Israel's increasing identification with the West. The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was dissolved; the Jewish State Theatre in Moscow was closed. Shlomo Mikhoels, a prominent actor and head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, was assassinated (by the KGB according to Zionists) and various Yiddish publishing houses and periodicals closed. Hundreds of prominent Jewish literary figures and political activists were arrested and charged with undermining the Soviet state by working with Western bourgeois or Zionist forces. The height of the anti-Zionism campaign was manifested in an announcement in January 1953, that a group, mostly of Jewish doctors, were plotting to kill prominent Soviet leaders (apparently including Stalin). These doctors were accused of working on behalf of the Zionist 'international Jewish bourgeois national organization' — the Joint Distribution Committee. In February 1953, a month after the announcement of the discovery of 'the doctor's plot' the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel, and shortly thereafter began to support the Arabs in their confrontation with the Zionist state. The Soviet reversal on the Arab-Israeli question was largely motivated by Israel's increasing integration with US imperialism.

After Stalin's death in March 1953, the campaign against 'the doctor's plot' was quietly dropped. But it had provoked suspicions against many Jews working in medical facilities on the grounds of their alleged Zionist sympathies (and thus anti-Soviet potential). Thousands of Jewish medical specialists were dismissed from laboratories, hospitals, medical institutes and faculties during this campaign.<sup>62</sup>

\* The US had a monopoly on the atom bomb until 1949, a far stronger economy than did the war devastated Soviet Union, and was just rearming an independent Western Germany (see Chapter 7).



Many anti-Soviets in the West, especially Zionists, have argued that the 1948-53 campaign against 'cosmopolitanism' and 'Zionism' was really a manifestation of anti-Semitism (analogous to that of Hitler's) but a realistic assessment demonstrates that this argument functioned to serve the interests of Western and Israeli Zionists in their long-term battle with Jewish Marxists for hegemony in the Jewish community, as well as to strengthen Western imperialist support for Israel. Nevertheless, in common with the far more vicious events of 1936-38 the hysteria and the purges of 1948-53 seem to have been the outcome of a considerable over-estimation of the danger from pro-Western Jewish and Zionist forces in the Soviet Union. Many innocent Jews appeared to have suffered, although little permanent harm seems to have resulted either to individuals or to their careers. The Soviets were slow, however, in restoring the various Yiddish cultural institutions that were closed in the 1948-53 campaign, and, combined with the rapid undermining of Yiddish and Yiddish culture through urbanization, education and professionalization, this has meant that distinctive Jewish cultural life never regained the level of the pre-1948 period.

### **The Economic Position of Soviet Jews**

Professionally and economically the Jewish people have fared extremely well in the period of Soviet power. They are, for example, far more highly educated than any other nationality in the Soviet Union, and in 1970-71 the ratio of higher education students per 1,000 population was 49.2. This is almost twice as high as the next highest group, the Georgians, who had a ratio of 27.1 per 1,000. (Russians rank fourth on this indicator with a ratio of 21.1 per 1,000). (see Table 2.6). In the Russian Republic in the early 1970s, of every 1,000 Jews of ten years old and above 344 completed some form of higher education, compared with only 43 out of 1,000 Russians; an 8 : 1 ratio in favour of the Jews. Comparable ratios in the Ukraine were 6.5 : 1 in Belorussia 7 : 1 and in Latvia 5.5 : 1.<sup>63</sup> In the early 1970s approximately 110,000 Jewish students were in institutions of higher education; this represents 2.55% of the total — an over-representation factor of almost three. In 1960 77,000 Jewish students had been in such institutions.<sup>64</sup>

In 1971, 6.7% of all scientific workers in the Soviet Union were Jews. In that year .9% of all Soviets were Jews, therefore, in this field Jews were over-represented by a factor of 7.5. Armenians, with an over-representation factor of 1.5 in the same year came next, and Russians, with an over-representation factor of 1.2 were fourth in this respect (see Table 2.7). Around 1970 about 68% of all Jews employed in the Russian Republic were specialists with either a higher or secondary special education; this compares with 19% of Russians.<sup>65</sup> In the mid-1960s, 15% of all Soviet doctors, 9% of all writers and journalists, 10% of all judges and lawyers and 8% of all actors, musicians and artists were Jewish.<sup>66</sup> The percentage of Jews in the various professions has been declining, even though their absolute numbers have been rising. In 1972, there were 68,000 Jewish scientific workers,



approximately double the number of those so employed in 1960; but in that year 9.5% of all scientific workers were Jews compared to 6.1% in 1973. Given the considerable advances of the traditionally backward nationalities, especially the Asians, this is to be expected.<sup>67</sup>

### **The Jewish Religion**

The practice of Judaism as a religion has received more or less the same treatment as has the practice of other religions, such as Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, Catholicism and Lutheranism. Official policy and practice is to permit religion to be practised, but to discourage its propagation by forbidding organized religious instruction, active conversion and other forms of religious propaganda, while at the same time officially propagating anti-religious and atheistic precepts. The Party considers all religions to be superstitions which will gradually die out, as the oppressive conditions which gave birth to them are eliminated, and the old people brought up in the old religious environments die. When applied to Judaism, the official anti-religious policies in operation for all religions are often singled out by the Western media or by Zionist interests in the West to substantiate the claim that the USSR discriminates against Judaism (in a manner analogous to Hitler), thereby attempting to mobilize world Jewish and public opinion against the Soviet Union.

Ninety-eight percent of Jews in the USSR live in urban areas, mostly concentrated in the larger cities. This fact, together with the remarkable educational and professional progress of Soviet Jews, manifests their central integration into Soviet society, with the corollary of rapid deterioration of traditional Jewish ways. Most Jews, especially the younger, have adopted the secular atheism of Soviet society, few any longer subscribe to Judaism. It is mostly the old, together with nationalist dissidents, who attend religious services or otherwise practise Judaic rites.<sup>68</sup> As a result the number of active synagogues have been declining.

In the early 1970s there were about 100 active synagogues in the Soviet Union, although the figure given for 1972 by anti-Soviet Jewish organizations in the West was 58.<sup>69</sup> A small *yeshivah* operates in Moscow to train rabbis, and limited editions of prayer books are published: 3,000 in 1957, and another edition of 5,000 in 1968. Two Judaic religious rites have been subjected to pressure from the state: Passover and circumcision. Circumcision, which is also traditionally practised by the Islamic peoples, is regarded by the Soviets as a barbaric custom comparable to subincision or clitoridectomy. The Soviets have attempted to suppress this practice since the Revolution; more stringently in the Asian republics than among the Jews. The celebration of Passover is regarded as primarily a Zionist rather than a pious manifestation. Passover commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage and is marked by the recitation of the words 'Next Year in Jerusalem'. That Zionists both inside and outside the Soviet Union, many of whom are atheists, have, in fact, given the celebration of Passover a Zionist and anti-Soviet character (asserting that the modern day



Egyptian captor is the Soviet state) has not gone unnoticed by the Soviets. There have been Jewish complaints both inside and outside the USSR that the Soviet state often puts obstacles in the way of securing *matzo* (unleavened bread) which is used as part of the Passover celebration.<sup>70</sup> Such mild harassment of what is officially considered to be anti-Soviet or reactionary aspects of a religion is by no means unique to the treatment of Judaism. For example, the traditional pilgrimage to Mecca, required of devout Islamic men, has been largely suppressed, as has the wearing of the veil for women.

Soviet anti-religious propaganda in general attacks all religions, and in particular, those aspects that are regarded as specifically harmful within each religion. An analysis of anti-religious propaganda directed at Jews in the 1960s finds such specific themes as: (1) The Jewish religion promotes allegiance to another state, Israel, and to a reactionary, pro-imperialist movement, Zionism; (2) the Jewish religion promotes the notion that the Jewish people are superior to others, 'the chosen people', and thus breeds hatred of other peoples; (3) the Jewish religion elevates the pursuit of material wealth, a pursuit incompatible with the Communist ideal of Soviet society; and (4) the Jewish religion calls for genocide and enslavement of other peoples by the Jews (a reference to the effect of Zionism on the Arabs).<sup>71</sup>

### **Jewish Culture**

Traditional Jewish languages, especially Yiddish, are dying out in the USSR. In 1970, only 17.7% of Jews reported that they spoke a Jewish language as their native tongue; a further 7.7% reported they were able to speak such a language, but that it was not their mother tongue. Those who continue to speak Yiddish, or one of the Oriental Jewish languages, are either old people or those largely concentrated in the peripheral regions that were incorporated into the USSR in 1939-41, or both. Very few younger Russian, Belorussian or Ukrainian Jews now speak or understand Yiddish. This contrasts sharply with the situation before the Revolution, when 97% of all Jews in Russia (including Russian Poland) regarded Yiddish as their mother tongue; by 1926, this figure stood at 70%.<sup>72</sup> In 1970, 60% of Jews in Lithuania specified Yiddish as their native tongue, 40% in Latvia and approximately 50% in Moldavia.<sup>73</sup>

The rapid decline of Yiddish reflects the general decline of distinctively Jewish culture among a highly urbanized, educated and professionalized population that has become fully integrated into Soviet society. That the responsibility for this decline does not rest upon any Russification policies of the Soviet state is demonstrated by the situation of the various European and Asian minority nationalities that are geographically concentrated. In these areas, rapid economic progress has not undermined traditional languages and cultures. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there have been no Yiddish language schools in the USSR since 1948.<sup>74</sup>

A small Yiddish cultural establishment still exists in the USSR, although on a much smaller scale than in the pre-1948 period. Yiddish papers,



publishing houses and theatres were restored after 1956, following their suppression as part of the 1948-53 'anti-cosmopolitan', anti-Zionist campaign. In the mid-1970s there were two Yiddish periodicals circulated in the USSR: *Sovetish Heimland*, a literary monthly with a circulation of 25,000, and the thrice weekly newspaper the *Birobidzhaner Shtern* with a circulation of 12,000, largely outside the Jewish Autonomous Republic of Birobidzhan where it is published. Yiddish speakers also have access to Yiddish language publications and periodicals published by Jewish Marxists overseas.<sup>75</sup>

A few books continue to be published in Yiddish. Between 1948 and 1970, 32 Yiddish language books were published in the USSR.<sup>76</sup> More important than Yiddish language publications, which can be read by only about one of eight Soviet Jews, are works translated into Russian which originally were published in Yiddish. In recent years there have been a considerable number of these, many of which are issued in quite long press runs. For example, in 1973 50,000 copies of I. Rabin's *On the Nieman*, originally written in Yiddish, were printed in Russian. Many Russian translations from the Yiddish are of poetic works.<sup>77</sup>

The most conspicuous expression of Jewish culture in the USSR, and that receiving the widest participation, is the Jewish theatre. There are several Jewish song, music and drama companies, the oldest being the Vilnius Jewish People's Theatre, which was established in 1957. Since 1962, the Moscow Dramatic Ensemble, a Jewish theatrical group, many of whose actors were part of the old Jewish State Theatre, has been performing regularly in Moscow; there are also a number of other itinerant Jewish theatre groups, including the Birobidzhan Yiddish People's Theatre and the Kishinev Jewish People's Theatre.<sup>78</sup>

### **Political Positions**

Jews have the highest representation in the Communist Party of any other Soviet nationality. In 1965, 80 out of every 1,000 Jews belonged to the Party, compared to the Soviet average of 51 per 1,000.<sup>79</sup> In 1969, Jews made up 1.5% of the Party (an over-representation factor of 1.67).<sup>80</sup> As other nationalities, especially Asians, are increasingly brought into the Party, and as the Party's recruitment policies increasingly favour the working class, the percentage of Jews in the Party has been declining, even while their absolute number has been increasing. Between 1920 and 1940 the percentage of Jews in the Party fluctuated around 4.5% to 5.0%.<sup>81</sup> The percentage of Jews in the principal leading body of the Party, the Central Committee, is proportional to the number of Jews in the population. In 1976, three Jews were elected to the 330 person Central Committee.<sup>82</sup> In the 1920s, 25% of the Central Committee was Jewish, 10% in the late 1930s, 2-3% in the 1950s, and .3% in the 1960s.<sup>83</sup> Given the strong representation of members from working class and peasant backgrounds on the Central Committee, and the increasing political mobilization of the more backward nationalities, that the proportion of Jews now accords with their percentage of the population should be considered neither



extraordinary nor exemplifying discrimination.

The number of Jews elected to all local Soviets between 1959 and 1973 has averaged about 7,000 per election, or about .4% of all Soviet delegates (an under-representation factor of about .50).<sup>84</sup> In 1970 and 1974 six Jews were elected to the Supreme Soviet: roughly proportionate to their share of the population.<sup>85</sup>

Very few Jews now occupy prominent positions in the Party or government apparatus, in contrast to the pre-1948 situation when Jews were prominent in all major aspects of government and Party activities. In the early 1970s the highest ranking Jewish person was the Deputy Minister for Supplies, V. Dymshits, who was also the highest ranking Jewish person on the Party's Central Committee; another was Alexander Chakovsky, the editor of the influential *Literary Gazette*. Lev Shapiro, the first secretary of the Birobidzhan Party organization and also a member of the Central Committee, became increasingly influential during the 1970s.

The evidence seems to point to a certain distrust of Jews in sensitive top leadership positions, initially aroused during the 1948-53 'anti-cosmopolitan' /anti-Zionist campaign, and reborn after the 1967 Israeli-Arab Six Day War, when many Soviet Jews adopted pro-Israeli sympathies — thus manifesting opposition to Soviet policies. While there seems to be no substantial evidence for discrimination against Jews as Party members or in middle level Party and government positions, the evidence is compatible with some political discrimination against them for the top leadership roles as heads of ministries, Politburo members and first secretaries of leading Party organizations. Given the long history of Jews having filled leading roles in the Party, which continued throughout the Stalin period, this seems to reflect Soviet doubts about historically specific Jewish loyalties on the question of Israel/Zionism, rather than classical anti-Semitic attitudes.

### **Anti-Semitism in the USSR**

Not surprisingly, the virulent anti-Semitism of all classes in the pre-1917 Russian Empire has left remnants of anti-Semitic attitudes, especially among older, less educated and more rural populations, even after two generations of Soviet education. To the extent that such attitudes linger on, in spite of official Party policies designed to eradicate them, must be distinguished from the economic and political policies and educational campaigns of the Party. Evidence concerning whether or not Jews in the Soviet Union experienced a significant amount of interpersonal anti-Semitism is mixed. Studies of recent Soviet emigree's anti-Semitic experiences casts considerable doubt on the theory that interpersonal anti-Semitism is a major factor in the country. A 1973 survey of 2,527 emigrants from the USSR in Israel found that 25% of those who had been nationalist activists in the USSR claimed never personally to have experienced an incident of anti-Semitism. In another survey of emigrants bound for Israel only 39% claimed that anti-Semitism in the USSR was a primary reason for their emigration. It is of interest to note that many more emigrants, bound for the US rather than for



Israel, claimed both to have experienced anti-Semitism and that such experiences were the primary reason for their emigration. Anti-Soviet pro-Jewish emigrant observers, such as Gitelman, draw the reasonable conclusion that a language of motives focusing on anti-Semitism has been formulated that maximizes the probability of being accepted into the US, that is, affirms the claim to legitimate refugee status. Asserting the desire to make more money or to advance one's career as the reason for emigration to the US would not be effective.<sup>86</sup>

### **Zionism and anti-Semitism**

From the beginning of the Soviet state in 1917, the Soviets, with various degrees of intensity, have systematically attacked Zionism as reactionary, pro-imperialist, racist and, since World War II, essentially Fascist. They share their analysis with most of the rest of the world's Marxists, including many Jewish Marxists, as well as with most progressive movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America; especially those in the Islamic world. Anti-Soviets, especially those sympathetic to Zionism and the Israeli state, often fallaciously accuse the Soviet Union of anti-Semitism because of Soviet attacks on Zionism. But the two are quite different. Anti-Semitism, the ideology that Jews are a race to be despised and that to discriminate against them is justified, is against the law in the Soviet Union and, as far as I can ascertain, totally absent from all official Party and government written matter. Anti-Zionism, the notion that Jews should not seek or support a separate state in which all Jews maintain solidarity solely amongst themselves – rather than with individuals of other ethnic groups – is official state and Party policy.

Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda includes such themes as the following: (1) that most international Jewish organizations in the West are controlled by Jewish capitalists and, therefore, operate against the interest of workers; (2) that Israel endeavours to establish an inherently anti-Communist 'fifth column' inside the Socialist countries; (3) that Zionism and Israel are 'implacable enemies of the socialist camp'; (4) that Israel is intent on building a 'Greater Israel' from the Nile to the Euphrates, where the Israelis would be a kind of master race comparable to that expounded in Nazi ideology for the Aryans; (5) that the Israeli state's ruling class jeopardizes the very existence of Israel as a state by the expansionist and militarist policies they follow; and (6) that Zionism, as practised by the Israeli state in relation to the Arabs, is closely paralleled by the treatment of Jews by German Fascists.<sup>87</sup>

Claims that the Soviet Union engages in anti-Semitic propaganda can invariably be reduced to statements such as these about Zionism, or to examples of anti-religious propaganda which, as applied to Judaism, do not differ qualitatively from that applied to Islam or Christianity. It is difficult to see how anti-Zionism and propaganda against the religious aspect of Judaism can justify the claim that, similar to Fascist anti-Semitic propaganda, the USSR considers Jews to be racially inferior. Such, however, is the



implication of most statements that employ examples of anti-Zionism to support the contention of Soviet anti-Semitism.

Indicative of Zionist allegations of official Soviet anti-Semitism was the response of some Jewish dissidents, in November 1980, to an article in the *Young Pioneer's Newspaper* which attacked Zionism as 'modern day Fascism' calling it 'the main enemy of peace on Earth'. This article went on to argue that Zionists who control 'the major portion' of the US mass media have 'orchestrated anti-Soviet campaigns and opposed the strategic arms limitation treaty', and that 'Jewish bankers and billionaires' established the Jewish Defence League which 'terrorizes' Soviet diplomats in New York, and that Jewish bankers acted to 'defend their own class interests'. In commenting on this article, Jewish dissidents in the Soviet Union said that:

We regard it as one of the worst examples of anti-Semitic writings to have appeared in Soviet publications in recent years. . . . Even more unfortunately, it is the first time in recent memory that anything so blatant has appeared in material intended for children.<sup>88</sup>

If such statements are indeed the most blatant examples of official anti-Semitism that Zionist critics of the Soviet system can find, one can be assured that there is no official anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

The Six Day War between Israel and the Arab states, which was won decisively by Israel, generated much sympathy for the Israelis among many Soviet Jews. Given the Soviet's active support for Egypt and Syria in this war, and their strong commitment to opposing Israeli expansionism, and to the creation of a Palestinian state (it should be noted that the Soviets have never advocated the elimination of the state of Israel), such sympathy for its enemies aroused concern. Beginning in 1967 a Zionist dissident movement began to gain credibility within the Soviet Union; it manifested itself in such activities as large numbers of non-religious Jewish youths gathering around synagogues to demonstrate their support for Zionist ideas and Israel's cause, as well as the promotion of emigration to Israel. Jewish dissidents came to participate in the full range of dissident activities which focused on attacking Soviet policies and institutions in interviews with Western reporters, and in documents smuggled out of the Soviet Union.<sup>89</sup>

The Soviet government's response was to step up its anti-Zionist propaganda campaign to a considerable extent, emphasizing the six themes itemized above. In 1966 only ten articles attacking Zionism were reported in the Soviet press, in 1969 there were 42, and at the peak of the anti-Zionist campaign in 1970, there were 204.<sup>90</sup> The post-1967 campaign was largely directed towards persuading Soviet Jews not to leave the USSR for Israel.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Post-1967 Jewish Emigration from the USSR**

Throughout the 1960s about 1,000 Jews a year emigrated from the USSR to Israel; mostly on the grounds of reunification with their families. After the 1967 War, significant numbers of Jews began to apply to leave the USSR



for Israel. In 1971, the government, apparently recognizing that its campaign to persuade Zionist Jews to stay was ineffective, began to issue numerous emigration visas for Israel. In 1971, approximately 13,000 Jews emigrated to Israel; approximately equal to the total number of those who had left for Israel in the previous 12 years.<sup>92</sup> From 1972 to 1977 approximately 30,000 Jews left for Israel each year, and in 1978 and 1979, when emigration became easier, roughly 50,000 left each year. Virtually any Jews wishing to leave were granted emigration visas during these latter years. Emigration declined after 1979, indicating that most of those who wished to leave had already done so, as well as a stricter emigration policy coincident with the revived Cold War. Between 1968 and 1976, 133,000 Jews left the USSR, approximately 6.2% of all Soviet Jews; by the beginning of 1980 the percentage had risen to roughly 12%,<sup>93</sup> a total of approximately 250,000. In the early 1970s, Roy Medvedev, usually an accurate source of information about the dissident community in the USSR, estimated that between 200,000 and 300,000 Jews would apply to leave. Maximum estimates from anti-Soviet sources speculated that the figure would reach 500,000, that is 25% of all Soviet Jews.<sup>94</sup> The decline in emigration in 1980 and 1981 indicated that the Medvedev estimate was probably correct – that is, almost all who had wanted to leave had left.

Those who left the USSR had been heavily concentrated in certain areas of the country. Over 50% who applied for exit visas between 1968 and 1976 were from the five Republics of Georgia, Uzbekistan, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldavia. Generally, Jews who emigrated, during that period at least, were either from areas newly amalgamated with the USSR (Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia or the Western Ukraine) where they had not yet fully integrated themselves into Soviet life, or from Soviet Georgia where, although conditions were exceptionally good for Jews, their brand of Judaism virtually mandated their emigration to the 'Holy Land'.<sup>95</sup> Over 50% of all Georgian Jews migrated – mostly to Israel – as did 22% of Latvian, 41% of Lithuanian, 13% of Moldavian and 8% of Uzbek Jews between 1968 and 1976. This contrasted sharply with the picture for the Soviet heartland of the Russian Republic, the Ukraine and Belorussia, where, according to the 1970 census, 80% of Soviet Jews live. In the same period only 1.9% of Russian Jews left the country, as did 1.6% of Belorussian Jews and 5.5% of Ukrainian Jews, most of whom were from the western third of the Republic – formerly part of Poland. Less than 12% (about 16,000) of the total Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union between 1968 and 1976 was from Russia proper.<sup>96</sup>

These figures indicate that until the mid-1970s the motives for emigration were overwhelmingly religious and cultural, and neither as a result of anti-Semitism nor general dissatisfaction with Soviet life. Seemingly, the vast majority of Jews who had been part of the USSR since the Revolution were quite content to live in the Soviet Union. The emergence of a different motive in the mid-1970s is indicated by a radical change in the destination of Jewish emigrants. In 1974, 18.8% chose to go to the US and the other Western capitalist countries rather than to Israel, as did 37.2% in 1975, and



49.1% in 1976, while only 4.2% chose such destinations in 1973. In 1979 and 1980, only about one-third of Soviet Jewish emigrés went to Israel, in 1981 20%, most now preferring the higher incomes and professional advancement possible in the US.<sup>97</sup> Many Jews who originally migrated to Israel re-emigrated and settled in the US. This suggests that the desire to maintain Jewish culture or help build the Zionist state, has been superseded by the desire for financial gain and to advance one's career.<sup>98</sup> An increased proportion of Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian secular Jewish emigrés are another manifestation of this change of motive.

Perhaps the most significant observation to be made about Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union after 1970 is the relatively small percentage (3% to 4%) who availed themselves of the opportunity to leave the Soviet heartland. Presented with the opportunity either to live in a predominantly Jewish culture in Israel, or obtain a significantly higher standard of living in the USA, 95%-97% chose to remain in the Soviet Union. It should be noted that, over the period 1970-79, only 5.1% of Moscow Jews emigrated, even though in the latter part of this decade it was very easy for Jews to do so.<sup>99</sup> Emigrés were mainly those Jews on the margin of the mainstream of Soviet life together with a relatively small number of professionals throughout the country.

Western attempts to present the Soviet Union as a virulently anti-Semitic society cannot be substantiated. Historically, the Jewish people in the USSR have fared, and continue to fare, very well in almost all respects. Jews are over-represented in the highest paying occupations, in the skilled professions, in the institutions of higher education and in all except the top levels in the Communist Party; but, as was noted previously, Jews are no longer over-represented in state legislative and top administrative positions. There is no evidence of official or Party approved anti-Semitism, and little evidence of interpersonal anti-Semitic expressions. The majority of Jews are fully integrated into Soviet life and demonstrate their support for Soviet institutions.

## Conclusion

As is the case for the Soviet Asian Republics, there is no evidence of exploitation or economic discrimination by the Soviet government in the European Republics; with rapid industrialization their economies have all prospered. Additionally, education, books, newspapers, theatre and so on in the various native languages have been actively promoted. Although, as a result of the integration of Jewish people into modern Soviet society, traditional Jewish culture is dying out, the Jewish people, too, have thrived. In short, the success of Soviet policy towards the European and Asian Republics in the USSR is one of the principal accomplishments of the Soviet system.



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## 4. Women in the USSR

### The Rights of Women

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was followed by a radical transformation in the legal and economic position of women. Marriage and divorce became matters of mutual consent effected by simple registration. Divorce could be initiated by either party, and marriage became a formally egalitarian institution with all legally enshrined forms of male dominance eliminated. All restrictions on women's freedom of movement were abolished; a wife was no longer required to reside with her husband or to change her place of residence when he did. Fundamental changes in inheritance and property laws undermined the traditional authority of the husband-father and of the family in general. Women acquired the right to own personal property and to act as the head of a household, and in general, attained equal legal status with men. In addition, abortion was legalized, and socialized forms of child care were developed, while the distinction between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' children was abolished.<sup>1</sup>

The radical transformations in the legal status of the family proved to be too advanced for the very backward conditions of the 1920s. This was especially clear during the period of extreme crisis arising from rapid industrialization in the 1930s (see also Chapter 7). The Soviet peasantry, who comprised the majority of the population in the 1920s, still lived in extremely backward and superstition ridden conditions. The liberating climate, both of the intelligentsia, which had provided the leaders of the Communist Revolution, and the urban working class, which provided the leadership, was swamped by the influx of peasants into the cities who came to work in the rapidly expanding industries in the 1930s and 1940s. Many of these men allegedly took advantage of the advanced family legislation to enter into unions in which they had no intention of remaining, misleading their wives and deserting them at will, freed of any legal responsibility, except for the support of any children which may have resulted.

In the 1920s abortion became widely practised as a form of birth control. In the 1930s this, together with the tendency, facilitated by the early family legislation, for long term unions to be undermined, presented a serious problem, since in order to secure a sound demographical base both for defence



and modernization population growth was essential. Divorce was thus made considerably more difficult, and in 1936 abortion was banned, except for medical reasons, and only became legal again in 1955. In 1944 the catastrophic death rate caused by the German invasion provoked a further retreat to more orthodox family legislation and divorce was made even more difficult; requiring the payment of a considerable fee and involving a lengthy and complicated procedure. Suits to establish paternity were banned, with the state taking on the responsibility for supporting the children of unmarried mothers. At the same time, both material and moral incentives were instituted to encourage motherhood. Rigorous measures were considered necessary in order to counter the loss of 20 million, mostly young, people in the War. In the 1950s and 1960s with the recovery from the effects of the war and the rapid improvement in material living standards, most of the more progressive aspects of Soviet family legislation and policies were reinstated.<sup>2</sup>

Two articles in the 1977 Soviet Constitution refer directly to women's role in society: Article 35:

Women and men have equal rights in the USSR. Exercise of these rights is ensured by according women equal access with men to education and vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration, and promotion, and in social and political, and cultural activity, and by special labour and health protection measures for women, by providing conditions enabling mothers to work; by legal protection, and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leaves and other benefits for expectant mothers and mothers, and gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children.

and Article 53:

Marriage is based on the free consent of the woman and the man; the spouses are completely equal in their family relations. The state helps the family by providing and developing a broad system of child-care institutions, by organizing and improving communal services and public catering, by paying grants on the birth of a child, by providing children's allowances and benefits for large families, and other forms of family allowances and assistance.

Contemporary Soviet family legislation treats husbands and wives as equals. Marriage is considered to be neither a means for the economic support of women, nor for the provision of household services by women. Men have no legal obligation to support their wives or ex-wives; women have no legal obligation to provide their husbands with any services. Forcible sex by husbands is legally defined as rape; women have the right to retain their maiden name, to control an equal share of the communal property and, of



course, enjoy equal personal and property rights.<sup>3</sup>

Mothers (in contrast to wives) do have special protective legislation; pregnant women, and wives with children under the age of one year, may not be divorced without their consent,<sup>4</sup> and in the case of divorce child support is mandatory. An ex-husband is required to contribute 25% of his earnings to his former wife if she is looking after one child, and one third if two children are involved, and 50% if there are three or more children. The fact that virtually everyone works in a state-owned enterprise easily facilitates this legal requirement, as deductions are made automatically from paychecks and the money given to the mother. Exceptions to the legal requirement can be made by the courts under conditions of special hardship and a father's conflicting responsibilities. The courts commonly reduce the percentage of income requirement in the case of a father remarrying and taking on the responsibility of contributing to the support of a new family of children.

After the Revolution, the right, and indeed the obligation, of women to work outside the home became official state and Party policy. This was a realization of the traditional Marxist theory of women's liberation as represented by Engels' classical statement in *The Origins of Private Property, the Family and the State*. Engels argued that the subordination of women to men is based upon the economic power of the latter over the former, and that the liberation of women would follow from her introduction into public industry and the abolition of the family as the economic unit of society; that is, when both partners have an independent income.

Especially in the 1930s and 1940s, the policy of encouraging women to work outside the home was also motivated by the need to expand the labour force as rapidly as possible in order to industrialize, beat the nazis, and reconstruct the country. It was considered wasteful for the majority of women to work only as homemakers, or be confined to menial blue or white collar labour. Women's abilities were tapped in virtually all industrial sectors and levels, including coal-mining, heavy industry, engineering, medicine, administration, science and so on. The introduction of women into 'public industry' required a less radical change in attitudes than a similar process might have done in the West at that time, since the tradition of women's labour being limited to housework (women in Islamic areas excepted) did not operate in the largely peasant country; peasant women were accustomed to work in the fields and in family handicrafts as well as caring for house and family. The transformation of women's economic roles thus largely encompassed the introduction of ex-peasant women into mining, factories, clerical jobs and the technical and scientific intelligentsia. Hard, physical labour was not new to peasant women, the most radical transformation here was the large scale introduction of these women into higher education, and into such fields as science, engineering, agronomy, medicine (as doctors).

The Soviet Labour Code grants women workers many important rights. Paragraph 73 reads:

It is specifically forbidden to refuse employment or lower the pay of



any women for the reasons connected with her pregnancy, childbirth, or child nursing. The dismissal of any pregnant or nursing woman, or any woman who has children below the age of one year, is specifically forbidden except in those cases when the enterprise is liquidated altogether, whereupon all such women must be provided with comparable substitute employment.

Women receive the same paid vacations and the same pension rights as men, the only difference in terms of such rights is that women are eligible to receive their pensions at the age of 55 years — five years earlier than men.<sup>6</sup>

After the Revolution the Party initiated a Communist women's movement, aiming to stimulate the actual transformation of relationships, to undermine the traditional attitudes of men and women, , to mobilize women in the national effort to reconstruct the country after the destruction wrought by the civil war, and to construct a socialist society. In the 1920s much of the actual mobilization of women, in addition to enabling them to overcome barriers to acquiring literacy, to attend higher education and work in the modern sector, took the form of encouraging them to construct 'institutions of daily life', for example, such as schools, collective dining halls and houses, and to engage in support activities for the Red Army.<sup>7</sup>

The strongest impact of the Communist women's movement and of Party and state policy dedicated to the liberation of women, has been upon the traditionally Islamic areas, where the oppression of women was the greatest. With the establishment of Soviet power in Central Asia the most repressive traditional practices were singled out for attack. Forced marriage, marriage by abduction, bride price, polygamy, child marriage, female seclusion and the veil. Such practices were outlawed and made subject to criminal sanctions. The bulk of the new family legislation was introduced simultaneously in Central Asia and in Soviet Europe, but with some, more radical, provisions only gradually introduced into Central Asia.

In 1927, the traditional Islamic courts were divested of all authority including their ability to adjudicate in family matters; traditionally, two female witnesses were considered the equivalent of one male in such courts. In 1926 a campaign against female seclusion was launched. The first phase of this campaign was directed to the more urban, intellectual and politicized sectors of the population that was most likely to accept it; the second phase was directed to the rest of the population. The Party organized demonstrations where women publicly took off their veils; these demonstrations were often violently disrupted by men. Many Asian women were killed, typically by their brothers, for appearing publicly without the veil, taking jobs outside the home or actively participating in the anti-seclusion campaigns. In the public squares of many cities and towns in Soviet Central Asia today there are monuments to these women. The opposition of the Party and government to such killings was made clear by well publicized arrests, trials and executions of the men involved, and by launching a massive public education campaign against the pernicious effects of traditional Islamic practices.



The Women's Department of the Party (*Zhenotdel*) was most active in Central Asia, and was committed to eliminating what it considered to be barbaric practices, but also it saw the liberation of women as an important means to mobilize the national minorities of Central Asia behind the Bolshevik Revolution. *Zhenotdel's* strategy in Central Asia was to crystallize discontent around the women's question and channel it into the all-round socialist transformation of society. Asian women were recruited and trained to staff the new political and social institutions, thereby rooting the new Soviet forms in the national minority communities.

The *Zhenotdel* encouraged women to initiate divorce proceedings; traditionally this was the prerogative of men, for whom obtaining a divorce was very easy. Legal advice centres were set up by the *Zhenotdel* to help Asian women learn about, and fight for, their new rights. The new civic and property rights established by the Revolution were enforced in order to help release the grip of Islamic traditions on relations between the sexes. Women were recruited into professional and administrative positions with a considerable degree of success, thus breaking the monopoly of men. The *Zhenotdel* established women's clubs which engaged in 'consciousness-raising'. Women were encouraged to discuss their problems within the framework of Marxist theory, and the backwardness imposed by the previous social order was contrasted with the liberating potential of socialism.

Although the *Zhenotdel* itself was dissolved in 1929, the campaign against traditional patriarchal practices continued to be actively pursued until the backbone of traditional resistance was crushed. The process was intensified during the collectivization of agriculture and the rapid industrialization of the 1930s and 1940s. Women's councils were established both on the collective farms and in new industries of Central Asia, and functioned to fight the 'survivals of the past way of life', to politically educate women, and to attract them away from the home and into public industry.<sup>8</sup>

The success of Soviet policy on women was highlighted by the number of Asian women in top professional, governmental and administrative positions in Central Asia in the 1970s. There were 18 Uzbek women of cabinet or immediate sub-cabinet rank in the Uzbek Republic in the early 1970s; and 116 women were heads or assistant heads of major industrial enterprises. Eighteen percent of all judges in Uzbekistan were women (this compares with 3% in the US). The ratio of Uzbek women PhDs to the Uzbek population was six times higher than the ratio of black women PhDs to American blacks. By 1970, the high school enrolment for Uzbek girls was exactly proportionate to the percentage (49%) of the Uzbek population that was female; in 1955, of the total enrolment, only 25% had been girls. Although in these respects Uzbekistan is perhaps the most advanced of all the Central Asian Republics, comparable advances have been achieved in the rest of Central Asia.

The Soviet system's contribution to liberating Asian women of Islamic backgrounds must be contrasted with the contemporary condition of women in capitalist or semi-feudal Islamic countries. The majority of Arab countries



in the 1970s did not permit women to vote. In most Islamic countries the majority of women are illiterate and few rural girls receive any formal schooling. In only a handful of Arab countries (e.g. Algeria, Sudan) is any significant proportion of women employed outside the home; patriarchy is the rule in the family, and wives are subjected not only to the whims of their husbands and fathers, but to those of their mothers-in-law; throughout most of the Arab world, divorce is still the prerogative of the male. For women, pre-marital chastity, and total constancy to her husband after marriage are decreed, while for men consorting with prostitutes is the norm. It is still common throughout most of the Islamic world for the brothers or husbands of women who have had pre- or extra-marital relationships to kill them for the sake of family 'honour'.<sup>9</sup>

## **The Family, Housework and Child-care**

The Soviet system has wrought fundamental changes in the relative status and power of the sexes within marriage. Legal rights and economic roles have been radically transformed, the division of labour, decision making within the family, and the relative importance of domestic labour for women, have been significantly changed. The majority of wives are at least as well educated as their husbands and, especially among younger women, most wives work full-time outside the home throughout their lives. These facts, combined with the Soviet marriage code and Communist Party policy on the equality of the sexes, have obviously deeply affected personal and domestic relations, even though considerable remnants of older practices still exist.

The growing economic independence of women is reflected in the trends in the Soviet divorce rate. In 1960, there were 104 divorces per 1,000 marriages, in 1975 there were 325. Apparently neither men nor women are prepared to maintain unsatisfactory relationships.

Soviet women spend considerably less time on housework than was the pre-Revolutionary norm, and relative to women (and men) in capitalist countries. This is partly because housework has to some extent become mechanized (but far less than in the US) and socialized and partly because men now participate to a greater degree than was customary. Various studies on the relative time spent on housework by women and men in the urban areas of the USSR reveal that household chores are likely to be fairly equally divided when both marriage partners have full-time jobs outside the home, particularly in the younger age groups.<sup>10</sup> In the US, on the other hand, the tendency is for men to spend much less time on housework than do women.<sup>11</sup> While in the USSR in the 1923-24 period only about 20% of the male's contribution to total working time (i.e. time spent on work outside the home, work related activity, and housework) was committed to housework compared to 42% of the women's, in 1972-73 40% of the man's, compared to 48% of the woman's was so spent. McAuley found that in 1972-73 women spent an average of 37.1 hours weekly on housework and related activity and



men 29.9 hours. This meant that men spent four-fifths as much time on housework as women – a rather radical change from the comparable percentage of two-fifths as much as women in 1923–24.<sup>12</sup> It thus appears that the introduction of women into the labour force has produced a rather radical transformation in the responsibility for housework within the Soviet family. The traditional 'double day' with housekeeping and child-care as the wife's responsibility would seem to be largely a thing of the past (although still common among older and more rural couples).\*

In the USSR the most radical change in women's traditional household responsibilities has been effected by the socialization of child care, primarily in the form of day care centres for families in which both parents work. Subsidized day care is available for all urban and most rural families that desire it. In 1970, there were 103,000 day care centres in the USSR, and 120,000 in 1977, with an enrolment of 12.7 million. The enrolment figure in 1970 was 9.3 million; in 1960 4.4 million and in 1940 1.1 million. The 1970 figure represents more than 50% of all urban pre-school children and about 33 1/3% of rural children.<sup>13</sup> This compares with about 10% of pre-school children in the US in 1970 who attended day care centres.<sup>14</sup> Day care centres are located both in neighbourhoods and at places of employment. Soviet legislation requires that all factories with a work force of more than 500 employees must maintain creches.<sup>15</sup>

The very extensive day care system is supplemented by a rapidly growing system of extended day schools, which offer a variety of after school programmes while parents are still at work. In 1970–71, about 5.2 million children were enrolled in such institutions (up from .6 million in 1960).<sup>16</sup>

Nurseries for children under three years old are supervised by the Ministry of Health; in 1977, about one-third of all children in all day care centres (about 3.7 million) were in this age category. Kindergartens for children from three to seven years old are supervised by the Ministry of Education, and provide some basic education and social training.<sup>17</sup> The policy of Soviet day care centres is to foster a spirit of co-operation and sharing. According to Western observers they seem to be successful in this. The youngest children engage in group play in communal playpens; while older children

\* Lapidus (1978, p. 271) argues on the basis of other studies that women still do the bulk of the housework in the USSR. She cites studies which purport to show that the average husband puts 8% of his time into housework, compared to the average wife's 19%. It seems that the discrepancies between the findings of Lapidus and McAuley lie in the latter's much broader definition of housework than the former's. For example, it appears that the bulk of time men spend in child-care is excluded in the Lapidus studies, as is probably home repair and 'handyman' type of housework. It is clear, however, that when all categories of contributions to the family are considered: work, work related activity and all family responsibilities around the house including child-care, that men and women in the Soviet Union now spend about equal amounts of time, while at the same time, in the typical family both the husband and wife work outside the home at a full time waged job.



are organized into small groups for collective play.<sup>18</sup>

In the late 1960s the state covered about 80% of the costs of the running of pre-school institutions, with the balance made up from fees and contributions from unions and enterprises.<sup>19</sup> Party policy is gradually to abolish all fees for day care. Fees vary from three to eight roubles a month (about \$5 to \$12) according to parents' income, and must not exceed 2-3% of that income. The scale of payments rises for 24-hour child care. Reductions of 25% to 50% are available for lower income families, those who maintain more than one child in child care centres, children of war widows, and children of single mothers who earn less than 60 roubles a month. Families with four or more children also receive a reduction of 50%.

In addition to paying most of the cost of socialized child care (including that of feeding children while in the creches) the state also provides various family allowances to aid the economic support of children in the home. Women who have two or more children are given a grant at the birth of the third and all successive children: from 20 roubles for the third child to 250 roubles for the eleventh and subsequent children, plus a monthly allowance of four roubles a month for the fourth child, rising to 15 roubles a month for the eleventh and subsequent children. Working women who become pregnant receive a set sum of money to help with the purchase of necessary equipment for the child. Unless the father is supporting the children, single mothers receive an allowance of five roubles a month for one child, 7.5 for two, and 10 per month for three or more.<sup>21</sup> Since 1974 all families with a per capita monthly income of less than 50 roubles have had a monthly income supplement of 12 roubles until the child's eighth birthday.<sup>22</sup> These programmes are both a manifestation of the stated goal of Soviet welfare policy increasingly to distribute society's resources on the basis of need, and to provide a material incentive to lighten the economic burden of child care in order to increase the birth rate, which, largely because women are more work oriented than family oriented, has declined below replacement levels throughout much of the USSR.

Abortions are available on demand, with a standard fee of five roubles (about \$8), unless a woman's monthly income is less than 60 roubles, or, if the operation is performed for medical reasons, there is no fee.<sup>23</sup> A consequence of this cheap and easy access to abortions, however, seems to be a careless attitude towards contraception. Inter-uterine Devices (IUDs) are available and, since 1968, their use has been encouraged as a matter of state and Party policy, but few women make use of them. In the mid-1970s condoms and the practice of *coitus interruptus* were the most common forms of birth control, with about half the women stating that their partners used condoms, and one-third that they employed *coitus interruptus*; spermicidal foam was also used.<sup>24</sup> The Pill is available, although not generally encouraged, both because of doctors' and women's concern about its effect on health.

While Soviet women on average each have about six abortions over the course of their reproductive life,<sup>25</sup> the US Population Council estimated



that for the USSR in the mid-1960s for every live birth there were approximately 2.5 abortions. In 1977 the ratio of (legal) abortions to live births in the US was .4, or one-sixth the Soviet rate. This represents an average of one legal abortion per woman during her life.<sup>26</sup>

## Education

Before the 1917 Revolution illiteracy was widespread among peasant women; 88% of all Russian women were illiterate,<sup>27</sup> and in the Asian areas almost 100%. Even primary level education was the exception, especially in the rural areas where approximately 90% of the female population lived. By the end of the 1930s almost all girls, even those in rural areas, received some formal education, and illiteracy among women was virtually eliminated. By the 1960s primary and secondary education became universal for both sexes throughout the USSR.

In 1939, of females over ten years old, only 9% had completed secondary education, compared to 13% of males in the same age group. By 1977 the percentage had risen to 55% of females and 63% of males. The 1977 figure indicates an increase of more than six times in the probability of women having a secondary education over the 1939-77 period; in fact, by 1959 more than half (53%) of all (men and women) who had completed secondary school were women.

In 1939 only .5% of all women over ten years old had a higher education, compared to 1.1% of all men. But by 1977 5% of all women over the age of ten had completed higher education, compared to 6% of all men. This represents an increase of over ten times in the probability of a woman receiving a higher education and the almost total elimination of the gap between the sexes. The small remaining differential is a product of more favourable opportunities for men in the past, rather than of recent graduation ratios. In fact, while in 1939 32% of all higher education graduates were women, by 1970 women had achieved parity – being then 49% of all graduates.<sup>28</sup>

In the US in 1978 slightly more men aged 25 or more had completed high school than had women (65%). In this year in the US the percentage of women to men who had completed secondary education was 98%, compared to the 1977 Soviet average of 87%. It should be noted, however, that while the differential advantage of men in the USSR is being rapidly undermined, the opposite trend has been occurring in the US. In 1960 in the US, the median years of school completed by women was half a year more than for men, but by 1978 it was one fifth of a year less.<sup>29</sup> While the slight educational advantage for men in the USSR is as a result of educational practices in the 1920s and 1930s, the declining position of women in comparison with men in total education received in the US seems to be a product of contemporary conditions.

In the USA in 1978, 19.7% of men (25 or older) had a college degree, compared to 12.2% of women.<sup>30</sup> The probability for women to receive a



higher education in the US is thus .62 that of men; the equivalent Soviet ratio is .82.

Table 4.1 illustrates the relative position of women in higher education in the USSR and the USA. It can be seen that in almost all areas Soviet women are significantly ahead of their US counterparts. The remarkable improvement in Soviet women's position is strikingly demonstrated by the fact that in many cases by the 1960s Soviet women had made much more progress than US women had achieved by the late 1970s (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Women's Higher Educational Achievements: Some Comparisons between the USSR and the USA

	<i>Field</i>	<i>Degree</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Percentage Female</i>
USSR	Economics/Law	All degrees	1975-76	62%
USA	Economics	Undergraduate	1977	23%
	Law	All degrees	1977	13%
	Economics	Ph.D.	1977	11%
USSR	Engineering	Undergraduate	1975-76	40%
USA	Engineering	Undergrad and MS.	1977	4.5%
USSR	Biology	Undergraduate	early 1960s	75%
USA	Biology	Undergraduate	1977	36%
USSR	Chemistry	All degrees	early 1960s	67%
USA	Chemistry	Undergraduate	1977	23%
	Chemistry	PhD	1977	12%
USSR	Mathematics	Undergraduate	early 1960s	45%
USA	Mathematics	Undergraduate	1977	42%
USSR	Physics	All degrees	early 1960s	33%
USA	Physics	Undergraduate	1977	12%
	Physics	PhD	1977	6%

Sources: Dodge, 1966; Lapidus, 1978; McAuly, 1981.

\* The years for which the comparisons are made are those in which the studies available in English report data. The fact that the Soviet data is usually about 15 years earlier than the US data makes the Soviet figures all the more striking.

It is clear that relative to men: (1) women are more likely to receive either a basic university education or a doctorate degree in the USSR than in the USA; (2) Soviet women are much more likely to be found in the subjects traditionally virtually reserved for men in the USA — especially engineering, economics, law, and the natural sciences, where the relative probability of earning a university degree averages about three times higher in the USSR than in the USA.<sup>51</sup> In summary, the Soviets are now on par with



the US in the probability of providing basic education through secondary school to both sexes. The Soviets surpass the US in the differential probability of women completing college and graduate school, and the number of women graduates in the fields of law and economics, physics, chemistry and the other natural sciences.

The rapid expansion of women's position in advanced education was deliberate Party and state policy, effected in part by a quota system designed especially to assist women from peasant and worker backgrounds. For example, in 1929 a quota of 25% was set for chemical and textile technical schools. Higher education institutions were assigned a minimum quota of 20% for industrial specializations, 30% for agricultural faculties and 35% for socio-economic specialties.<sup>32</sup>

### **Labour Outside the Home**

In 1922, 25% of the total Soviet labour force (male and female) was female, in 1940, 39%, and throughout the 1970s, 51% (roughly the proportion of women in the population). The labour force participation rate for women (the percentage of all women who worked) in the USSR in 1975 was 83.1% for women 16-54 (compared to 62.7% in 1960). This compares with a 55.7% labour-force participation rate for US women in the same age group at the same time.<sup>33</sup> In the US in the mid-1970s women represented 39% of the entire labour force, in Italy 28%, in France 35%, in Spain 21%.

The most rapid increase in the percentage of women workers has occurred in the USSR's national minority areas, especially the traditionally Islamic Republics. Between 1933 and 1964 the percentage of all workers who were women increased from 19% to 39% in Turkmenistan; in Tadzhikistan from 23% to 37%; in Kirgizia from 21% to 43%; in Uzbekistan from 27% to 40%; and in Azerbaïdzhan from 24% to 39%.<sup>34</sup> These figures compared with the Russian Republics' percentages of 32% and 51%.

In 1975, women were 28% of all Soviet construction workers, compared to about 2% in the US at approximately the same time. In the same year they were 24% of all transportation workers (compared to 8% in the US); 42% of metal and machinery workers (compared to 3% in the US). In general, women are much more integrated into the skilled and central industrial occupations in the USSR than they are in the USA.<sup>35</sup>

Soviet women have made the most rapid progress in those industries which traditionally had been virtually closed to them. In 1926, only 1% of machinists and machine adjusters were women, in 1959 they comprised 6% and in 1964 9%, representing a 50% increase from 1959-64.<sup>36</sup> In the mid-1970s about 25% of USSR master crafts workers were women,<sup>37</sup> and in the US in 1975 women comprised 4.6% of 'craftsmen and kindred'.<sup>38</sup>

Equal pay for equal work is the rule in the Soviet Union but the differential occupational distribution, although much less than in the West, remains quite significant. Women are concentrated in relatively low paid



jobs (e.g. white collar work, light industry), while men are disproportionately in more highly paid employment in heavy industry, skilled manual work, mining and administration.<sup>39</sup>

Table 4.2 gives the sectoral distribution of Soviet women in paid employment. The average pay in those sectors in which women comprised less than 40% of the total work force in 1975 was 175 roubles per month, while in those sectors in which they comprised 60% or more, it was 118 roubles per month. Thus, predominantly female sectors tend to receive about two-thirds the pay of predominantly male sectors.

Table 4.2

Distribution of Women Workers and Employees and Average Monthly Earnings, by Economic Sector, 1975 (USSR)

<i>Economic Sector</i>	<i>Number of Women Workers and Employees</i>	<i>Women as Percentage of Labour Force</i>	<i>Average Monthly Earnings (Roubles)</i>
Construction	3,002,000	28	176.8
Transport	2,211,000	24	173.5
Industry (production personnel)	1,662,000	49	162.0
Science and scientific services	2,015,000	50	155.4
<i>Nationwide average</i>	52,539,000	51	145.8
Credit and state insurance	423,000	82	133.8
Apparatus of government and economic administration	1,457,000	65	130.6
Education	5,904,000	73	126.9
Agriculture	4,530,000	44	126.8
Communications	1,042,000	68	123.6
Housing and municipal economy, everyday services	2,010,000	53	109.0
Trade, public catering, materials & equipment, supply and sales	6,763,000	76	108.7
Arts	207,000	47	103.1
Public health, physical culture, social welfare	4,851,000	84	102.3
Culture	747,000	73	92.2

Sources: Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1975 g.* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 542-43; 546-7 (cited in Lapidus, 1978:192).



The income differential between men and women in socialist countries in general (and in the USSR in specific) is somewhat less than in the advanced capitalist countries (and the USA in particular). In the USSR the ratio of the average female to male wage in 1972-73 was .66. In Czechoslovakia and Poland in the 1970-72 period, it was .67, and in Hungary .73. On the other hand it was .59 in the United States, .62 in the UK and .63 in France and Switzerland at about the same time.<sup>40</sup> Studies of specific industries in the USSR (as in the West) show a significantly smaller earning differential than do the figures for the economy as a whole, indicating that the bulk of the earning differential is effected by the occupational distribution of women workers, rather than by direct pay discrimination for equal work. For example, in 1973 in Kiev, the wages of cotton spinning industries women were 86% of those paid to men, while in 1970 in the Leningrad machine building industry, women's wages were 73% of those paid to men.<sup>41</sup>

The differential in pay is largely a result of men being both concentrated in higher paying industries and in higher paying positions within given industries. For example, in the construction industries, where women comprise only 28% of the labour force, their average monthly earnings in 1975 were 176.8 roubles and in transport, where they were 24% of the total labour force, their average monthly earnings were 173.5 roubles. In contrast in trade where women comprise 76% of the total labour force, their average monthly earnings were 108.7 roubles, and in public health and social welfare, where 84% are women, their monthly earnings were 102.3 roubles. It should be noted, however, that in some occupations where monthly earnings were above the national average, women accounted for about half the labour force, e.g. production workers in science and industry; while in others, where the average income was less than the national average, men made up the majority, e.g. agriculture. But on average men do tend to be concentrated in the higher paid occupations. The average monthly pay in those sectors which comprised of less than 40% women workers was 175 roubles, while in those sectors with 60% or more of women it was 118 roubles.<sup>42</sup>

The differential distribution of men and women in the occupation structure lies in a combination of the effect of: (1) discontinuities in women's occupational careers, especially in her 20s and early 30s where promotion and on-the-job training possibilities are lost to those without major occupational breaks; (2) a greater orientation to family (especially children) than to 'career' among women; and, of less importance (3) protective legislation prohibiting the employment of women in especially dangerous occupations or those that require exceptionally heavy lifting (e.g. such occupations as coal-mining and aspects of heavy construction; these are among the highest paying occupations in the USSR).

One study of the Russian Republic in the early 1970s found that 54% of women workers had a break in their employment record compared to only 10% of men. Twenty-three percent of all women workers had at one point or another been out of the active labour force for at least one year.<sup>43</sup> About 75% of breaks in women's employment record were attributed



to childbirth. To quote McAuley, 'women still regard their occupations more as a job, and less in terms of a career than do men; they are less responsible to questions of career advancement.'<sup>44</sup> Most Soviet sociologists and economists who study the question of earning differentials between men and women attribute it primarily to differential child-care responsibilities.<sup>45</sup> The effect of such responsibilities on advancement possibilities is manifested in the reduced probability of working women who are also mothers attending continuing education programmes. An early 1970s study found that 12% of working women without children, compared to 5% of those with one child and 3% of those with two children, were involved in a continuing education programme.<sup>46</sup>

In 1941 in the USSR 31% of all economists were women, while in 1966 women comprised 63% of all economists. In the US in 1970 of all economists 11% were women. In 1970 74% of USSR physicians were women, compared to 9% in the USA in the same year, whilst in the Soviet Union in 1939 61% of physicians were women.<sup>47</sup>

In 1941 there were 44,000 women engineers in the Soviet Union, and by 1970 more than one million (about twice as many as were doctors), that is, more women engineers in the Soviet Union than in the whole of the rest of the world, almost as many as male engineers in the US and over 40 times more than women engineers in the US.<sup>48</sup> In 1970, women comprised 30% of all engineers in the USSR, and 40% of all engineering students. This field of occupation is thus becoming more sex balanced.

Between the end of World War II and the early 1970s, the percentage of all USSR doctors who were women remained constant at around 75%, declining as the 1970s drew to a close, and, given medical school enrolments, this trend will continue. In the early 1970s about 56% of all medical students were women. Medicine, like engineering, is thus tending to become a more sex balanced profession. In 1970, there were more women physicians in the USSR than throughout the rest of the world with about 20 times more than in the US, (twice as many as male doctors in the US).<sup>49</sup>

Women within the professions are disproportionately concentrated in the lower level and non-administrative positions, although to a lesser extent than in the US. For example, Soviet women in the mid-1970s represented only 30% of surgeons (compared to 5% in the US), 50% of hospital administrators, and 20% of medical school professors, while they comprised 90% of primary care doctors – comparable percentages for the US are much lower.<sup>50</sup>

The percentage of all scientists and scientific technicians represented by women gradually increased from 36% in the 1950s to 40% in 1976; in 1978, in the US 18% of all scientists were women.<sup>51</sup> The number of Soviet women scientists with the approximate equivalent of the US PhD increased from 11,400 (25% of the total) in 1950 to 97,400 (28% of the total) in 1976.<sup>52</sup> The number of Soviet women scientists with academic positions as associate professor increased from 14.7% of all associate professors in 1950 to 22.9% of all associate professors in 1976, while the percentage of all associate professors who were men correspondingly declined from 85.3% to 77.1%.



In the US in 1969, 15% of *all* associate professors were women, as were 9% of full professors and 24% of assistant professors. In contrast, the percentage of all US college faculties represented by women declined from 32% in 1950 to 18% in 1970.<sup>53</sup>

Women's relative position within academic ranks in sciences in the USSR improved considerably between 1970 and 1976. While in 1950 only about 15% of *all academic women* held the high rank of associate professor, the remaining 85% occupying other ranks, in 1976 almost 40% of all academic women held this rank. In 1950, there were three times as many women in the junior research associate and assistant category as in the associate professor category, but by 1976 these ranks had equal numbers of women.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, women remain disproportionately concentrated in the relatively lower positions within the sciences, although to a lesser extent than in the West. It is necessary to note that, in 1977, the powerful USSR Academy of Sciences had only 14 women members out of a total of 749.<sup>55</sup>

Compared to their position in the professions, Soviet women have been less successful in attaining administrative positions, but considered in relation to their earlier position in Russian society and to that of women in the West (both in countries at similar levels of economic development and such highly advanced countries as the USA), they have done very well.

In 1975 in the USSR, women were 9% of all directors of industrial enterprises, compared to 1% in 1955, while in the US in 1970 women still comprised just 1% of industrial directors. Overall, in 1970 Soviet women held 16% of *all* managerial positions in economic enterprises, compared to 7% in the USA in the same year. Women were much more likely to hold managerial positions in retail enterprises and the services than in industry both in the USSR and the USA. For example, in 1970, Soviet women held 64% of all managerial positions in the retail industry, compared to 34% for US women.<sup>56</sup>

In the USSR the possession of an engineering degree is a virtual prerequisite for a managerial position in industry. Women are a rapidly growing percentage of all engineers, and this, together with the rapidly increasing percentage of women managers in industrial enterprises, suggests that their role in administrative positions will continue to expand. The previous predominance of men in higher managerial positions was largely as a result of their early preponderance in engineering training, but this is no longer the case for younger administrative personnel. The indication is that younger, technically qualified women will increasingly be promoted to high level positions of responsibility over time.

In educational institutions a similar pattern holds. In the 1955-56 period, 21% of the directors of secondary schools were women, in 1975-76, 29%; the percentage of women who are directors of primary schools increased from 22% to 33% over the same period.<sup>57</sup> The proportion of women school administrators in the US has declined over the same period: in 1950, about 50% of all primary school principals were women, but by 1970 only about 20%. From about 6% of all high school principals the percentage declined



to 1.4% over the same period. In 1970, there were 50 times as many women high school principals in the Soviet Union as in the United States.<sup>58</sup> In institutions of higher education in the USSR in 1950, 12% of department heads, 7% of deans and 4.8% of directors were women; in 1960 these figures were 12%, 9% and 5.3%.<sup>59</sup> In Soviet research institutions in the early 1960s women accounted for about one third of heads and deputy heads of branches, 21% of division heads and their deputies, and 16% of directors and their deputies.<sup>60</sup>

It has been suggested that the strong representation of women in science, engineering, and especially medicine (predominantly a woman's occupation) is accounted for by the low prestige of these occupations, and therefore that the extent of women's participation in these fields should not be considered particularly significant. The financial advantage of the engineering and medical professions over manual labour, especially heavy industry and mining is considerably less than in capitalist countries. In general the income differential between the professions and manual labour in the USSR is significantly less than in the West; further, the manual working class fares particularly well in relation to white collar and professional/managerial positions. Science, engineering and medicine are, in fact, high prestige occupations in the Soviet Union. A study of occupational prestige conducted amongst Leningrad secondary school graduates found that the occupations carrying the highest prestige are physicists, mathematicians and scientists, followed by cultural workers and aircraft pilots; next were physicians, followed by university teachers, and engineers.<sup>61</sup> Another study, among Estonian students, found physicians to have the highest prestige of all occupations, followed by cultural workers, physicists, mathematicians and chemists, then engineers.<sup>62</sup> The Leningrad secondary school graduates study also found that out of 40 occupational categories the most attractive career choice for women was that of physician; among the young men it was ranked as the tenth most attractive, after science, and chemical and mechanical engineering, but ahead of university teaching and construction or metallurgical engineering.<sup>63</sup>

In the US physicians have a particularly high prestige rating. In 1963, on a list of 90 occupations, physicians were ranked second in status, led only by Supreme Court Justices, followed immediately by scientists, and then top government officials. Civil engineers ranked at 21.5 on the 1 to 90 ranking, rather lower than in the Soviet Union.<sup>64</sup>

## **Protective Legislation**

After the October 1917 Revolution special protective legislation for women workers was instituted. The Soviet Labour Code established provisions for the protection of women's health at work while outlawing types of work that might endanger their ability to have children or the health of any such children. Limits were placed on the number of hours women could work, and certain types of especially dangerous and heavy work were reserved for



men.<sup>65</sup> The current Soviet labour code forbids enterprises to employ women in any activities which might be hazardous to their health; this is now considered to include work underground. Pregnant or nursing women, or those who have children under the age of one year may not be assigned overtime work. Women with children under the age of eight years may not be sent on out-of-town assignments, or required to work overtime, or on swing or 'graveyard' shifts without their consent. Pregnant women, nursing mothers and mothers with children below the age of one year, who are normally employed in manual labour, must be assigned lighter work, but with no reduction in pay. Women receive 56 days of paid leave both before and after giving birth; this is extended to 70 days for multiple or abnormal births. Women can choose to extend their leave, on an unpaid basis, for up to one year after giving birth without jeopardizing their seniority.<sup>66</sup> Enterprises are forbidden to refuse jobs to pregnant and nursing women, to reduce their pay or to dismiss them, also nursing mothers are entitled to a shorter work day. A new woman graduate who is pregnant or who has children under one year of age is guaranteed work in her speciality in an enterprise proximate to her family residence. Further, as special compensation for their responsibilities both as mothers and workers outside the home, the retirement age for women is five years earlier than that for men (55), with pensions being granted after 20 years, instead of the 25 required for men.<sup>67</sup>

## **Women in Political Positions**

### **Women Members of the Communist Party as a Percentage of Total Membership**

1920	7.4
1939	14.5
1966	20.6
1971	22.2
1976	24.3
1981	26.5 <sup>68</sup>

In 1961 there were 1,809,688 women Party members, and in 1981 4,615,576.<sup>69</sup> In the period 1976-80, 32.2% of candidate Party members were women; and of the 5,000 delegates at the Party's 26th Congress in 1980, 26.6% were women.<sup>70</sup> In 1975-76, 31.5% and in 1980-81, 35.1% of the Secretaries (leading administrative post) in the Party's primary organizations were women.<sup>71</sup>

The higher in the leadership and administrative structure the fewer women are to be found. At the time of the Revolution, three women served on the Central Committee of the Communist Party - 10% of the total; in the 1930s also an average of three women served on this body, then representing 2.5% of the total. In the 1970s, there were 14-15 women on the Central Committee, about 3.5% of the total. Of the 23



members of the Politburo, the day-to-day leading body of the Party, in the mid-1970s none were women.<sup>72</sup>

In the state apparatus, women fare rather better, especially as delegates to the various levels of the Soviet legislature (Soviets). In 1920, the participation of women in the politically active local Soviets in the urban areas was 1%; in 1934, 32%; stabilizing until the mid-1950s when it began to increase again.<sup>73</sup> The proportion of women delegates has increased at all levels. In 1959, 27% of Supreme Soviet, 32% of Republic Soviet (more or less equivalent to US state legislatures) and 41% of local Soviet representatives were women.<sup>74</sup> In 1975, 35% of the delegates to the Soviets of the Republics and 48% of the representatives to the local Soviets, were women. In 1979 33% of the delegates to the Supreme Soviet were women.<sup>75</sup>

In 1973, women held 47% of all elective positions (legislative, administrative and judicial) in the USSR.<sup>76</sup> Between the mid-1950s and the end of the 1970s only two women held ministerial rank in the Soviet government (Ministers for Culture and Minister for Health). Considerable numbers of women occupy lower level positions in the government administrative structure, although again they tend to be concentrated in such areas as cultural affairs, health, social security, light industry and consumer related services.<sup>77</sup> In 1970, 56% of the heads of Soviet Trade Union Branches were women, compared to 5% in the USA, although here, too, women are more likely to be found as head of the local rather than national unions.<sup>78</sup> In the judiciary, in 1972, approximately one third of all judges were women, compared with 2-3% in the USA.<sup>79</sup>

In the USA, in 1977, 7.8% of all elected local officials (mayors, local councils) were women,<sup>80</sup> and in 1974 3.4% of all Congress members (Senators and Representatives), 8.0% of all state legislators, and 2% of all state governors were women. In the Nixon administration there was one woman, in the Carter administration two, and at the beginning of the Reagan administration (excluding the position of UN ambassador) none.<sup>81</sup> Thus, during the 1970s in the US there was an average of one woman at the ministerial level at any given time. There has never been a woman in the US equivalent of the Soviet Politburo, that is: the Presidency, Vice-Presidency, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Defence, Director of the CIA and head of the principal financial institutions and top industrial corporations. In the Supreme Soviet the percentage of women is almost ten times greater than the percentage of women in the US Congress, in the more important Central Committee of the CPSU it is the same as in the US Congress: about 3.5%. Likewise, the proportion of women holding ministerial positions in the two countries is equivalent. At the Republic/State level the proportion represented by women is four times higher in the USSR than in the US. On the local level the Soviet figures are three to six times higher than in the US (depending on whether party membership, headship of local party units or local elected positions are compared). In summary, women are in a far better position at the local and intermediate levels of the political structure in the USSR than they



are in the US, but are very rare at the very top levels in either country.

## Analysis

The Soviet achievement in advancing the position of women both in relationship to their own recent (pre-1917) past and to comparable countries in the West (including even the most industrially advanced capitalist countries) is considerable. Women have been fully 'integrated into public industry', and the family 'as the economic unit of society' has been abolished. Women are considerably more independent of men, and far greater opportunities are open to them than ever before, or that exist for women in comparable capitalist countries. Nevertheless, there are two facts which, although of less significance than Soviet accomplishments, require careful scrutiny: 1) that relatively few women attain managerial positions, especially at the highest levels; and 2) the rarity of women in top party positions, and as government ministers.

Are these as a result of discriminatory policies of educational institutions and hiring and promotion policies? Or of differential sex role socialization, custom, and the inertia of traditional attitudes that in the face of Party policy, either die hard or persist because the schools and the Party have not given adequate attention to undermining them? It is assumed that the innate potentials for accomplishment of both sexes in creative and administrative roles is equal and that there is no differential sexual distribution of maternal or familial inclinations; (this is the traditional Marxist and behaviourist assumption).

Nevertheless, patriarchal values (attenuated to be sure) continue to be socialized into children, mainly through the family and to a lesser extent in schools. But in addition to Party and government efforts to transform these values, the realities of urban working class and professional life, with their different demands on husbands and wives, and especially the abolition of the family as the economic unit of society vis-à-vis women achieving full economic independence, seem to be transforming the traditional interpersonal relationship between the sexes. Under this dual pressure it is reasonable to assume that household responsibilities will increasingly be shared.

Evidence on schooling has demonstrated that in recent years the quality or quantity of education received by women and men is equal, and that the career prospects of women are not affected by any discrimination on this account. Among older people, however, who predominate in the leading administrative, Party and government posts, men are considerably better educated than women, reflecting earlier educational practices. Part of the differential, at least in high level administrative positions, must be attributed to this factor, as the rapidly increasing proportion of women administrators seems to indicate, as well as does the rising percentage of women engineering graduates. But that the abolition of educational



inequalities seems not to have affected the paucity of women in top ministerial and Party posts should not be overlooked.

That professional women are not overtly discriminated against in promotional policies (those with greater achievements are promoted regardless of sex) seems to be confirmed by studies of the productivity and accomplishments of women scientists and professionals. Women's contributions in professional journals is significantly less than their proportion in all the major professions. Women receive very few Lenin prizes or other rewards for major scientific accomplishments.<sup>82</sup> Such indicators may lead us to speculate that rather than being overtly discriminated against in the professions, women are perhaps in good part promoted in spite of relatively poor performance levels (i.e. because of seniority and quotas), but lacking a good analysis of the quality of women's and men's publications and accomplishments this cannot be asserted.

Overt discrimination in hiring and promotion would be reflected in higher than average achievement by those who are discriminated against. To be hired or promoted in spite of overt discrimination, implies that an individual's accomplishments are better than the average for people not discriminated against. Such, for example, has classically been the case for black athletes in professional sports in the US and for Jewish students when there were quotas for Jews, but this appears not to apply to Soviet professional women.

There are no studies on Soviet administrators comparable to the studies on Soviet professionals, so possibly, women's accomplishments here are superior to those of the average men in similar positions, i.e. that overt discrimination could be occurring here. Evidence suggests, however, that women's relatively inferior position in managerial positions is owing to the inertia of custom and tradition rather than overt discrimination. The persistence of custom and tradition, as we have suggested, affects not only older people but younger as well. That this may in part account for the under-representation of women in managerial positions is implied by the significant changes over time in the percentage of administrative positions filled by women.

Soviet education involves much less sex typing than in the West, but it is not entirely absent. Few, if any, jobs are explicitly portrayed as closed to women; primary school textbooks feature grandmothers who are construction engineers and mothers who drive heavy equipment. Women are not portrayed as primarily wives, mothers and/or sex objects either in textbooks or the mass media, but more often than men they are portrayed in caring roles, for example, crying children typically turn for comfort to a woman rather than a man. The curricula in Soviet schools is the same for both sexes, but for labour training sessions, the sexes are often separated, with more emphasis given to domestic skills for girls, and more to such skills as basic metalworking and carpentry for boys. Thus, boys are subtly encouraged to envisage their futures primarily in terms of jobs and career achievement, while girls, somewhat more in terms of motherhood, as well as



career achievement.<sup>83</sup> While in the West, however, mass media extols the housewife/sex object image, in the USSR the accomplishments of women scientists, astronauts and other professionals are celebrated. It is deliberate Party policy to encourage a career orientation among girls and women.<sup>84</sup>

Virtually all Western observers agree that the majority of Soviet professional women in good part still identify with women's traditional role as wife and mother, while being at the same time career oriented; my own conversations with Soviet women confirm this. Opinions on the proportion of child care and housework women consider men should do seem to vary considerably among even professional women. While many women feel that men should not share equally in housework, the conviction that women should have an independent career or occupation appears to be nearly unanimous. Soviet women generally prefer occupations which require less than an eight hour day/five day week, in order to have sufficient time for family affairs.<sup>85</sup> One reason why the medical profession is so popular with Soviet women is that the normal working day for doctors is six hours. Apparently those occupations and positions which require less than a total commitment of time and energy are preferred by Soviet women, even when their experience and education fully qualify them for highly responsible jobs. Women's greater commitment to the family and associated responsibilities, both because of their desire for such a role, and men's failure to assume equal responsibilities when women wish them to do so, naturally distracts from career advancement, especially in administrative and political leadership positions in which more or less full time commitment is required. It should be noted that full time working women annually take about six more days off work for 'family reasons', for example, caring for sick children, than do men.<sup>86</sup>

Studies have shown that significantly more Soviet men than women base their choice of career on job interest — 42% and 28% respectively. More women (55%) than men (43%) choose their job because 'circumstances allowed no alternative'. Soviet researchers attribute these differential motives to the fact that women choose work that fits into their husbands' career and their family commitments more often than vice versa; these considerations put restrictions on location, as well as working hours.<sup>87</sup>

The majority of men, as well as women, in high level administrative posts, or of the appropriate age for top political and economic positions, were socialized into the traditional values of the peasantry. In the 1970s 80% of top Party and government positions were held by people whose parents were either manual workers or peasants, whereas, for the scientific and technical intelligentsia, the parents of 50% were members of the intelligentsia. Most of those from urban manual working-class backgrounds grew up in families which only recently migrated from the countryside, many during the period of rapid industrialization after 1928. In common with the family structure of other Soviet nationalities, that of the Russian peasant was patriarchal. Owing to the forced industrialization in the 1930s, attitudes generated in this structure were carried into the working class at an accelerated rate.



While the emerging attitudes towards women's role, strongly encouraged by the mass media and education, differ significantly from the traditional patriarchal attitudes, the prevalent working-class peasant attitudes of the 1930s still weighed heavily on those who were 50 and over in the 1970s.

Perhaps the most perplexing fact about the position of women in the USSR is the failure of the proportion of women in top government ministries and Party positions to increase over the last years. It might have been expected that with women increasingly entering managerial jobs, together with the Party's deliberate policy to encourage women to have careers, more women would have attained top positions. In order to encourage other women, those who held positions of responsibility throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s could have been promoted, either on the basis of their past achievements or on that of their potential. Unlike in the United States, the practice of placing token women in top positions (for example, it has become the norm for there to be a woman cabinet member even if the definition of 'the cabinet' must be occasionally expanded to include the UN representative in the case of the Reagan administration) has not been thought necessary. While it clearly could not be expected that women would have achieved anything like equal membership in the Central Committee or top government ministerial positions in the 1970s on the basis of equal achievements (given the weight of traditional socialization and the past differential education), possibly there has been overt discrimination against qualified women who have adequate achievements to be promoted into top level positions. Such discrimination, to the extent it exists, is probably a result of lingering patriarchal attitudes on the part of the top (male) Party leadership — mostly socialized during the first decades of Soviet power in peasant or recently ex-peasant families.

As a new generation of Soviet leaders emerges such attitudes should be expected to decrease. How much the paucity of women in top leadership positions is due to overt discrimination, how much to the persistence of tradition and how much to the lack of equal training 20-30 years ago is difficult to determine, but it would seem that the latter two factors probably weigh the most heavily. Because of the relatively high level of consciousness of women in the USSR, combined with the legitimacy afforded to the ideology of the equality of the sexes as a matter of active Party policy, it is to be expected that unless significant progress is made in the relatively near future, the Party leadership will experience considerable pressure from women to change. It should not be forgotten that women have experienced both a long term increase in their share of Party membership and a growing share of those in positions of lower and middle level responsibility in the economic state and Party apparatus. Such women can be expected to lead a campaign for promotion into top level jobs.

The question of why there are not eleven women on the Politburo, 200 women on the Central Committee or 24 women ministers must be seen in perspective. For women as women the sex of the top leadership is of less importance than the policies followed by the leadership which affect women.



Whether or not a few hundred or even thousand women 'reach the top' is virtually irrelevant to the life chances and position of the 145 million Soviet women. Overall policies on women of the past and present leadership have been most progressive and, as has been seen, have resulted in the radical improvement of women's lot. In most respects it is difficult to see how these policies could have been significantly improved upon, given the parameters within which the Soviet system has had to operate: the need for rapid industrialization, to improve living standards and militarily to defend the country, have largely dictated that increasing productivity and efficiency must be always among the primary goals of Party policy. Consequently, from time to time, egalitarian social measures have had to take a back seat. However, a future, more feminine leadership might well press harder for the mechanization and socialization of housework. Such a mixed leadership would probably also press more for campaigns both to change women's lingering traditional attitudes towards family concerns which inhibit their careers and to affect quotas (such as were instituted in the 1920s and 1930s in educational institutions) to assist women to develop their potential, to provide role models to inspire other women, and to overcome lingering patriarchal attitudes among those who make promotional decisions.

## Conclusion

In summary, problems remain, but clearly the Soviet Union has made radical and rapid progress in resolving 'the women question'. From being among the most backward countries in Europe, in so far as the subordination of women before the 1917 Revolution was concerned, two generations of Soviet power have improved women's position vis-à-vis men at least to equal, and probably surpass, that of women in any country, however wealthy. This transformation in the position of women must be ranked as one of the principal accomplishments of the regime.

Even Western feminist critics of the USSR typically credit the Soviets with having made considerable progress on the 'women question'. For example, Lapidus, perhaps the most rigorous of Western feminist critics to have recently written on the USSR, argues:

The decline of the family as a productive unit and the separation of household from employment were not accompanied by the separation of large numbers of women from social production, as in the development of the European and American middle class. Instead, female employment occurred in conditions less favourable to family needs but more independent of family control. Finally, to the extent that access to education, occupational status, and income became relatively independent of the family unit, the bases of paternal authority were further weakened.<sup>85</sup>



... even if Soviet families are indeed undergoing a dramatic evolution from a traditional, patriarchal form of organization characterized by the subordination of women to a modern and egalitarian structure in which authority and power are more equally shared, only comparative investigations will make it possible to distinguish the effect of changes in female resources from the effect of other macro-social forces.

Clearly, Soviet ideology has altered the fundamental bases of female status through its devaluation of domestic roles and its emphasis on education and employment as the source of social prestige. It is also likely that female access to education, employment, and independent income enhance women's freedom of choice in entering and leaving marriage by reducing the value of the resources gained through marriage relative to those obtainable outside it. These are by no means minor matters, and they have enormous significance in and of themselves for female status and opportunities for self-realization.<sup>86</sup>

The general opinion of most Soviet women, that their position has greatly improved under the Soviet system, is also shared by the majority of women emigrés. To cite Jancar:

Although the female emigrés I spoke with view the Soviet political system as a contaminating environment, they share with women in the Communist countries their enthusiasm for what the Communists have done for women through legislation and the provision of communal facilities. In one emigré's view, a girl who gets an abortion in Israel or in the United States is a social outcast, but this is not true in the Soviet Union. Others criticize the absence of pre-school facilities and the prevailing attitudes toward women who have large families.

The emigrés' comments taken together appear to reflect a sense of injustice about the Communist system which does not include Communist policies toward women. The injustice covers such areas as the monolithic state, the tyrannical and ruthless bureaucratic Party hierarchy, religious and racial discrimination, and a host of other ills, but not discrimination on the basis of sex.

Indirectly, the attitudes of the emigré women confirm the positive identification with the Party and government of the successful women interviewed within the Communist countries. ... emigré women tend to view the Party and government as having taken progressive steps with regard to women.<sup>87</sup>



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# 5. Economic Rights

Basic economic rights include the right to eat, to a secure job, to a viable standard of living, to participation in economic decision making, access to medical care, and to education, adequate housing at a reasonable rate, and adequate retirement and disability benefits. In general, the application of such economic rights is more advanced in the Soviet Union than in any Western country, including those on the same level of development as the Soviet Union, and those most advanced Western capitalist countries, such as the US and Japan. Some capitalist countries equal or even exceed the Soviet Union in certain specific social security rights, such as medical care and disability and retirement benefits, for example, the Scandinavian countries and West Germany, but none match it overall.

## Living Standards

The real income of Soviet working people has been rather rapidly increasing since the 1940s. For example, in the 1970–1980 period real disposable personal income increased by an annual average of about 3% a year (which represented an increase of about one third in real income over the decade). Over the entire 1940–1980 period the real wages of Soviet factory and office workers increased by a factor of 3.7 times.<sup>1</sup> By way of comparison it should be noted that the real wages of all US workers *declined* by about 1% a year over the 1970s and early 1980s.

The improvement in living standards has been especially marked for lower income groups (particularly rural workers) and industrial workers owing to an increased minimum wage, the elimination of the traditional urban–rural differentials that favour the cities, the expansion of the social benefits which favour lower income groups, and the implementation of wage policies that, since the mid-1950s, have reduced income inequalities in the Soviet Union quite sharply.<sup>2</sup> Basic foodstuffs (for example, bread, meat, dairy produce, potatoes) are heavily subsidized by the state, and luxury goods – such as cars – are heavily taxed in order to secure funds for these subsidies. The food stamp programme in the US, which subsidizes food purchases for the poor, is the nearest equivalent. Housing and public transport in the USSR



are also heavily subsidized; the standard fare on the Soviet subway is five kopecks (about eight cents) – a fare that has remained unchanged since the 1930s. Housing, medicine, transport and insurance account for an average of 15% of a Soviet family's income, compared to 50% in the US,<sup>3</sup> while such services as higher education and child-care are either free or heavily subsidized.

The Soviets have increased both the quantity and quality of their diet until it is now comparable to that of Western Europe. This is illustrated by the data in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Nutrition: Comparative Figures for the USSR and the West: 1975-77

	<i>Average Intake Per Person Per Day</i>					
	<i>USSR</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>W. Germany</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Italy</i>
Calories	3,443*	3,552	3,247	3,376	3,152	3,463
Protein (grams)	103**	107	81	86	93	98
Animal protein (grams)	51***	72	54	55	63	45

\* An Increase of 5% since 1966-68

\*\* An increase of 7% since 1966-68

\*\*\* An increase of 24% since 1966-68

Source: Food and Agricultural Organization, *Production Yearbook*, 1978 and 1981, Tables 97, 98; see also Sivard, 1980, Table 3.

## Imports

### Agriculture and Grain

It has been claimed that because of the 'failure' of Soviet agriculture the USSR must resort to importing grain from the highly productive Western capitalist economies in order to feed its people, and consequently that the Soviet Union has become increasingly dependent on the capitalist world system. Indeed, the US suspension of Soviet grain purchases in 1980 was premised on this thesis. Let us look at both the trends in Soviet agriculture and the role of the grain trade with the West.

Table 5.2 shows that between the 1956-61 and the 1975-79 periods the Soviets increased their total grain production by a factor of 1.63 times. In the latter years total Soviet production averaged 199 million metric tons a year, compared to the 1956-61 average of 122 million. Soviet utilization of grains, however, increased even more rapidly, from an annual average of 116 million metric tons to 215 million metric tons – an increase of 1.85



Table 5.2

Soviet Grain (Millions of Metric Tons, Annual Averages)

<i>Annual Averages</i>	<i>Domestic Production</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Total Available</i>	<i>Utilization Feed Food</i>	
1956-1961	122	1.2	6.6	116	37	43
(% of total available)	105%	1%	6%	100%	32%	37%
1975-1979	199	18	2.3	215	111	46
(% of total available)	93%	8%	1%	100%	52%	21%
Ratio of 1956-61 to 1975-1979 average	1.63X	15X	.35X	1.85X	3.0X	1.07X

Source: Judith Goldich, 'USSR Grain and Oilseed Trade in the Seventies', *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change*, 1979, Vol. 11, p. 174.

times. From being a net exporter of grains (5.4 million tons in the 1956-61 period) the Soviet Union became a net importer (16 million tons in the 1975-79 period).

In the 1956-61 period 37% of available Soviet grain was directly consumed as human food and 32% was fed to animals. In contrast to the 1975-79 period, when only 21% went directly to human consumption (in absolute terms only 7% more than in the earlier period), and over half (52%) was utilized as animal feed; this represented a threefold absolute increase in grain fed to animals (see Table 5.2). This change reflects a major re-orientation in Soviet consumer goods policies. In the late 1950s the Soviets rapidly began to increase the meat, egg and dairy product consumption of the Soviet people by increasing the country's animal stock. In order to do this rapidly and steadily there was a decision to import animal feed (reversing the Soviet traditional role as a grain exporter), especially in those years when there was a shortfall in Soviet production.<sup>4</sup>

Table 5.3 illustrates the increase in Soviet cattle, hogs and poultry which occurred in the period 1955 to 1979. In 1979 the Soviets had 114.4 million head of cattle (2.02 times more than in 1955), 74.7 million hogs (2.41 times more than in 1955) and 940.9 million poultry (2.51 times more than in 1955). It should be noted that while the number of cattle, hogs and poultry in the US in 1955 was significantly greater than in the USSR, by the late 1970s the Soviets had surpassed the US figure in every major category. In 1979 the Soviets had three percent more cattle than did the US, 24% more hogs and 133% more poultry.<sup>5</sup>

Not only has Soviet animal production increased in the last generation, but Soviet agriculture in general has also radically increased its output over this period. Between 1950 and 1977 total Soviet output in agriculture increased by 147%, while during the same period US agriculture output



Table 5.3  
Soviet Livestock 1955-1979 (Million Head)

	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Hogs</i>	<i>Poultry</i>
1955	56.7 (100)	31.0 (100)	375.0 (100)
1960	74.2 (131)	53.4 (172)	514.3 (137)
1965	87.1 (154)	52.8 (170)	456.2 (122)
1970	95.2 (168)	56.1 (181)	590.3 (157)
1975	109.1 (192)	72.3 (233)	792.4 (211)
1979	114.4 (202)	74.7 (241)	940.9 (251)
1955-1979 Increase	2.02X	2.41X	2.51X

Source: Judith Goldich, 'USSR Grain and Oilseed Trade in the Seventies', *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change*, 1979, Vol. II, p. 177.

increased by 64%. The Soviet rate of growth over this period (about 3.5% a year) was more than double that of agricultural output in the US.<sup>6</sup> In terms of its dollar value, total Soviet farm output increased from 62% of US output in the 1950-54 period to 86% in the 1975-77 period, mostly accounted for by the value of livestock, which increased in dollar value from 48% of the US total in the 1950-54 period, to 81% in the 1975-77 period. The dollar value of crop production increased from 72% to 91% of the US output.<sup>7</sup>

It should be noted that the Soviet increase in animal stock occurred largely in the socialized sector (not on private plots). For example, while in the period 1966-70 27.9% of cattle were privately owned by peasants, in the 1976-78 period this was down to 20.6%; likewise, the percentage of hogs owned individually by peasants decreased from 26.1% to 20.5% of the total.<sup>8</sup> In general, the private plots have been significantly declining in importance. In addition to their share of total animal production decreasing, their share of total vegetable production fell from 41% of the total in 1965 to 31% in 1979; of milk, from 39% to 29%, and of eggs from 67% to 33%.<sup>9</sup>

Why then the periodic, rather large, purchases of animal feed from the West? The geography of the USSR is such that much of its crop land is vulnerable to climatic variations, and hence its crop yields vary considerably from year to year, making steady increases in livestock and meat production difficult to maintain without imports of animal feed during bad crop years. The growing season in the moist regions of the USSR is too short, while the warmest regions of the USSR are too dry. Only about 10% of the total area of the USSR combines sufficient moisture with adequate heat for all the basic grain crops, compared to about 20% in the USA (including Alaska). More than 30% of the USSR is too cold for any type of agriculture, while an additional 40% is so cold that only hardy, early maturing crops can be



grown. In the US, cold is a limiting factor in only about 20% of its total area, against 70% in the USSR.<sup>10</sup> The much greater marginality of utilizable land in the USSR is reflected in the annual variation in crop yields. Soviet annual grain production varies by 12.7% a year, compared to 7.2% in the US. Wheat yield varies by 16.5% in the USSR, compared to 6.1% in the US; corn yield by 14.1%, against 9.2%; oat yield by 14.8% against 8.3%, and barley yield 14.8%, against 6.8%.<sup>11</sup>

In summary, clearly the import of grain for animal feed does not make the Soviets dependent on the world capitalist economy. Net imports of grain in the 1975-79 period, which averaged about 8% of total grain utilized, were not significant enough to have an important effect on the Soviet economy. A total cut-off of Western grain supplies would simply mean a temporary increase in the slaughter rate of livestock and their slower future growth rate. An initial culling of livestock by the Soviets would need to be followed by stabilization of the availability of feed by storing more grain in good years for use in bad years, rather than relying on purchases in the world grain market to even out the production in different years. Moreover, the existence of a number of major grain exporting countries in the West, together with their tendency to over-produce, suggests the unlikelihood of the Soviets being unable to import the marginal quantities needed for their programme of increasing meat consumption. The 1980-81 attempted grain boycott of the USSR seemed to show that grain farmers in the West are more dependent on Soviet grain imports than the Soviets are on the West.

As part of their emphasis on increasing the consumption of meat and dairy produce, the Soviet state, since 1965, has raised subsidies both on the production and consumption of meat and dairy products by paying farmers significantly more for these products than they are sold for in the stores. In 1979, for example, the average price of a kilogram of beef was 1.65 roubles, while the average price paid to producers was 3.21 roubles. The state subsidy amounted to 48% of the retail price of all meat and dairy production, and in 1979 this represented about 9% of the total Soviet budget.<sup>12</sup>

### **Technology**

The Soviet Union is interested in accelerating the pace of technical modernization of its economy through importing high technology from the West. In order to conserve scarce hard currency and avoid incurring serious debts it has developed two forms of relationships with Western corporations; counter-purchase agreements (which involve a straight barter trade of Soviet products for Western products); and, increasingly more important, compensation agreements (which comprise the import of Western high technology goods into the Soviet Union in exchange for long term payment through a proportion of output from the imported technology).

One of the most famous counter-purchase agreements has been with Pepsi Cola. In this agreement Pepsi Cola ships Pepsi concentrate to the USSR



in exchange for an equivalent Soviet supply of vodka, which Pepsi sells in the West. Another well known example of this kind is that with the Occidental Corporation, which obtains Soviet ammonia in exchange for US fertilizer.<sup>13</sup>

The USSR concluded more than 45 compensation agreements with Western transnationals in the 1970s (worth a total of about \$8 billion in Western high technology imports). It is expected that hard currency savings from these agreements will rise from about \$1.5 billion in 1978 to about \$4 billion by 1985, that is the combined value of repayments in kind plus actual hard currency earnings from additional exports from the facilities constructed with foreign high technology imports.<sup>14</sup> The total value of new capital flow into the USSR in the 1973-75 period (the latest years for which data could be obtained) averaged \$961 million annually. This represented .8% of total Soviet gross fixed investment, not a very significant proportion of the total.<sup>15</sup>

Most of the compensation agreements into which the Soviets have entered have involved the import of equipment, for the production of either natural gas or chemicals, in exchange for the long term repayment in natural gas and chemicals produced through these imports. The first gas-for-pipe deal designed to facilitate the export of natural gas to Europe was signed with an Austrian firm in 1968. Since then similar deals have been signed with Italian, West German and French firms. Since 1978 the Soviets have been able to import from the West pipe and pipeline equipment worth about \$2.8 billion; they had also imported \$3.2 billion worth of chemical producing equipment. It should be noted that most of the chemical deals usually call only for an *equivalent* repayment in Soviet chemicals, while the gas-for-pipe deals normally call for Soviet exports of much greater value than that necessitated by repayment. The Soviets thus anticipate earning considerable hard currency through the ongoing export of natural gas. A few compensation agreements have also been signed with Japanese timber companies, where logging and lumber transport equipment from Japan was exchanged for wood and wood product exports from the USSR. Altogether, between 1968 and 1978, the Soviet Union and Western transnational corporation signed a total of 11 compensation agreements in natural gas, 28 in chemicals, four in wood products and one each in petroleum, aluminium and coal.<sup>16</sup>

It should be stressed that neither the counter-purchase nor the compensation agreements entered into by the Soviet state involve any direct investment, leasing, management or co-management rights for the Western corporations in any enterprises within Soviet borders. Although Western technical advisors are involved in the construction of the high technology chemical (and other) plants in the USSR, the ownership and management of all such enterprise is completely in Soviet hands.<sup>17</sup>

Soviet debt to the West increased from \$6 billion in 1971 to \$11 billion in 1978. In proportion to its national product the Soviet debt is minimal, representing only .9% of GNP. In contrast, in 1978, South Korea owed \$12.0 billion (26.1% of GNP); Algeria \$13.1 (52.6%); Mexico \$25.8



(28.7%); Brazil \$28.8 (15.6%); Pakistan \$7.6 (40.8%); Indonesia \$13.1 (27.6%); and Egypt \$9.9 (71.5%).<sup>18</sup> It is clear that the Soviet debt to Western banks is not (as it *has* been in Poland) an important mechanism of economic integration into the world capitalist economy or dependence.

## **Social Consumption and the Social Wage**

Over the years the Soviets have been increasing the proportion of total consumption of goods and services provided on the basis of need, that is, the 'social wage', or the various social consumption goods and services, have increased in relation to the wage. For example in 1940 the 'social wage' increased from 23% of average take-home monthly cash wages, to 28% in 1950, 34% in 1960, 35% in 1970, and 38% in 1980.<sup>19</sup> These figures corresponded to an average annual rate of growth in the real value of the per capita social wage of 4.9% over the 1940-50 period, 7.2% over the 1950-60 period, 6.1% over the 1960-70 period and 3.6% over the 1970-80 period.<sup>20</sup> In 1980 the Soviets were spending an average of 438 roubles per capita on social consumption. This compares to 73 roubles per capita in 1950, 128 in 1960 and 263 in 1970. Because there has been virtually no inflation in the Soviet economy over this period the great bulk of this increase corresponds to the real increase in socially consumed goods and services in the Soviet economy.<sup>21</sup> In the 1970s the Soviets spent 23% of their net material product on social consumption, while social spending in the US was 17% of its GNP. Because the concept of net material product excludes much of what is included in GNP, the differential between the two countries is actually considerably greater than what these two figures suggest.<sup>22</sup>

Various studies of the value of total public social consumption expenditures show that the absolute amount received per family tends to vary little regardless of the family earnings. Consequently, in relative terms, the social wage adds considerably more to low than to high income families and, like Soviet pricing policy, thereby acts to increase real income equality, that is, living standards are significantly less disparate than the statistics on wage differentials suggest.

## **Housing**

Low cost housing is considered to be a basic right in the USSR. Most of the urban population in the Soviet Union lives in apartment buildings owned either by the industries where they work or by the local government. About half of the apartments are built by industrial enterprises.<sup>23</sup>

The average rent in the USSR around 1970 was 2-3% of the average urban family budget. This compares to an average of 20-25% before the Revolution, and 25-30% in the USA in 1970.<sup>24</sup> It has been estimated that in the late 1970s, rent plus utilities (including laundry and telephone) averaged less than 8% of household income; rents have not been increased in the USSR since 1928, as a result the cost of housing as a proportion of income



is being continually reduced.<sup>25</sup> Income from rents covers only about one-third of the cost of operating and maintaining Soviet apartments. Thus, by absorbing the entire costs of construction/new construction and two-thirds of the costs of upkeep, the state and the enterprises which own the apartments are providing a substantial subsidy to tenants.<sup>26</sup>

Since the 1950s the Soviets have given high priority to apartment construction. In the 1960s and 1970s investment in housing remained fairly constant at about 5% of national income (17% of all investment). In the latter half of the 1970s the Soviets were constructing 2.1 million new housing units a year (providing new housing for 10.5 million people). This means that 4.1% of the entire Soviet population was provided with new housing in each year; this represented one of the highest rates of housing construction in the world.<sup>27</sup>

By 1977 the Soviets had increased the average housing space per dwelling unit to 51.1 square metres (up from 46.8 in 1970). This compares with an average of 85 square metres for Western Europe, and 120 square metres for the average dwelling unit in the USA in 1976.<sup>28</sup> The size of Soviet apartments in 1977 averaged about the same as US government-constructed mass housing produced during World War II for workers in war industries, that is, working-class housing standards in the USSR are about a generation behind those of the US.

The rent paid for Soviet housing is a function of the floor space, family earnings, services provided, and the age of the structure. In the Russian Republic, apartment floor space (bedrooms and living rooms) of up to 9 square metres per person, with full services, is paid for at a rate of 16.5 kopecks per metre per month for apartments constructed since 1924. For additional space, however, the rate is three times higher.<sup>29</sup>

Housing is allocated on the basis of need (usually according to family size) and time spent waiting to live in a certain area; for housing owned by industries special considerations are given to the need to recruit particular categories of (mostly skilled) workers, as well as certain categories of people such as 'heroes of Socialist Labour'.<sup>30</sup>

An individual or family, once allocated housing, is assured of security of tenure. By law, tenants of state owned housing can be evicted without rehousing only in such exceptional cases as lengthy absence or systematic destruction of housing. Tenants in housing owned by enterprises can also be evicted when they have voluntarily left the enterprise, committed a serious crime, or been sacked for due cause (a rarity).<sup>31</sup> In sharp contrast, tenants in most of the US can normally be evicted at any time for almost any reason, provided notice (usually 30 days) is given. In Soviet apartment buildings, housing committees elected by the residents play an important role in the management of the buildings, including the reallocation of apartments among tenants, and the allocation of additional space. Such committees supervise affairs within the apartments, advise the state housing office, and act as a mechanism for residents who wish to complain to higher administrative offices.<sup>32</sup>



## **Health Care**

The Soviet Union has the highest ratio of doctors to population of any country in the world. In 1977 there were 34.6 doctors per 10,000, compared with 17.6 in the US and 15.3 in the UK. It also has one of the highest ratios of hospital beds to people of any country. In 1977 the USSR had 121.3 beds per 10,000 compared to 63.0 in the USA and 89.4 in the UK.<sup>33</sup>

The Soviet Union has one of the best health services in the world in terms of accessibility and universality of service, as well as in basic quality of primary health care. The very high ratio of doctors to population has encouraged the expansion of medical services to include comprehensive industrial health care, widespread preventative examinations, especially of those most at risk, and frequently, home visits, which encompass some social work functions.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1969-78 period the USSR increased the share of GNP spent on health, as well as its spending per capita. In 1969 2.3% of its GNP was spent on health (and 13.6% on the military activities); in 1978 2.4% was spent on health (and 12.2% on military activities). This corresponded to a 59% increase in *absolute* resources allocated to health. Over the same period the Soviet population grew by 8%; thus, health spending per capita increased by 47% between 1969 and 1978. In 1978, the US spent 3.7% of its GNP on health.<sup>35</sup>

Drugs supplied in hospitals or prescribed for chronic illness (about 70% of all drugs) are provided free. Private practice is legally permitted, but it is heavily taxed and not widely available. Health care is provided both in neighbourhood polyclinics and at work places.<sup>36</sup>

The success of Soviet health (and nutrition) policy is revealed by a look at statistics on Soviet life expectancy, which, in the generation after the Revolution, radically increased. In 1900, in the Czarist Empire it was about 30 years, and about 47 years in the US.<sup>37</sup> The most rapid increase in life expectancy occurred between the mid-1920s and the mid-1950s. Nick Eberstadt, a harsh critic both of the Soviet system and of Stalin, said, 'Stalin managed to raise life expectancy in the Soviet Union from about 44 when he assumed total power, to about 62 when he died'.<sup>38</sup> During that period the Soviet system was able to improve health and nutrition, both in its European and Central Asian regions, to a standard roughly comparable to that in Western Europe and, by the 1960s, life expectancy in the USSR had reached approximately the same level as in the USA. In the post-1960 period there was minimal increase: between 1960 and 1975 it increased by only 2.0 years, compared to 3.1 for the USA. In the 1970s life expectancy in the USSR stabilized.

In 1960, in the USSR, life expectancy was 68.4 years, in 1970 70.0 years and in 1975 70.4 years. In 1975, life expectancy in the US for the white population was approximately 71.0 years (8 months longer than in the USSR in the same year), and 67.9 years for the non-white population. In the major advanced capitalist countries in 1975 the figure was slightly higher than in the USSR: United Kingdom, 72.4 years, Japan 72.9, West Germany 71.3 years. In the Latin American countries in 1975, however, it was considerably



lower than in the Soviet Union: Mexico 64.7 years, Chile 62.6, Brazil 61.4 and Argentina 68.2 years. In Finland, which prior to 1917 was part of the Russian Empire and is now more industrialized, with a high living standard and which still continues to have close relations with the USSR, life expectancy in 1975 was 70.1 years.\*

### Education

In common with primary and secondary education, all higher education is free, and students in higher education who maintain a 'B' average also receive a stipend. Such stipends vary according to the year of study, the subject studied, the type of school and the student's progress; no stipend is paid for a year that must be repeated.<sup>41</sup> In the mid-1970s university students received 40–60 roubles a month and technical school students 30–45 roubles.<sup>40</sup> Admission to higher education is by examinations for specific institutions; there are no IQ tests or general aptitude tests in the USSR. Students who fail one institution's entrance exam can reapply in future years or apply to other institutions.<sup>41</sup> Advantages are given to higher education applicants with work experience, for example, quotas, extra points on examinations, special tutorial programmes. In 1967, 30% of admissions to higher education were of people who had been working full time.<sup>42</sup> In general, Soviets are actively encouraged to continue with formal education throughout their lives. Indeed, the Soviets have one of the highest rates of attendance at institutions of higher education in the world.

### Job Rights

The Soviet Constitution promises everyone a job. The extreme shortage of labour throughout the economy ensures the reality of this constitutional guarantee; there is no unemployment problem in the USSR. In contrast, unemployment is a serious problem in capitalist countries where a large 'reserve army' of unemployed is a necessary condition of profitability. Further, workers in the USSR have a right to their job – it is very difficult to dismiss a worker, and this rarely occurs. But one consequence of the structural labour shortage resulting from economic planning for rapid economic growth results in a rather high turnover of staff – higher, in fact, than in the USA.<sup>43</sup>

Except in experimental enterprises (see below) the legally permissible reasons for dismissing a worker are: (1) liquidation of the enterprise; (2) a worker's unfitness for the job; (3) a worker refusing a transfer within the

\* For a full discussion of trends in Soviet medical care and life expectancy (with emphasis on infant mortality) see A. Szymanski, 'On the Uses of Disinformation to Legitimize Revival of the Cold War: Health and the USSR', in *Science and Society*, XLV:4 (Winter) 1981.



enterprise; (4) the systematic nonfulfilment of duties; (5) excessive absenteeism; (6) restoration of a predecessor to a job; (7) long term disability, and (8) criminal acts. Simple lack of work is not generally considered sufficient reason to lay off a worker. With few exceptions, workers may be dismissed for any of the above stated reasons only with the concurrence of the local and factory trade union committees. If the union concurs with the management on a dismissal, the worker can appeal to the courts for reinstatement. Studies have shown that about 50% of workers who appeal against dismissal are reinstated by these courts. Appeals on the grounds that dismissal had been effected without the prior approval of the trade union are almost always successful, even if the court finds that sufficient cause had existed for the dismissal of a worker.<sup>44</sup>

Beginning in the late 1960s some Soviet enterprises have adopted 'the Shchekino Plan' whereby workers can be declared redundant, that is, workers can be dismissed simply because there is no work for them, while the enterprise retains the funds assigned for the dismissed worker's wage. This plan was adopted on an experimental basis to determine whether or not it would free badly needed labour in the expanding sectors of the economy. In 1979 about 10,000 Soviet enterprises were using either the Shchekino or a similar method.<sup>45</sup> In selecting workers to be made redundant the enterprises are required to make their judgments in terms of seniority and family circumstances, such as number of dependants, pregnancy, single parenthood. The enterprise is also responsible for finding another, comparable job for the dismissed worker, or, if this is not possible, to pay the full costs of retraining the worker for another job of equivalent skill and providing a stipend for living expenses during the retraining process.<sup>46</sup>

In fact enterprises (experimental or otherwise) rarely discharge workers or declare them redundant. There is a strong tradition and moral feeling shared both by workers and managers that workers are entitled to their job — a tradition reinforced by the economics of the job market. The structural labour shortage, together with the assignment of wage funds to enterprises by the state, motivates them to hoard labour, even if not all their workers are efficiently employed. The difficulty in finding workers means that in order to be able to fulfil future demands of the economic plan, enterprises prefer not to risk reducing their present labour force.

Republic-wide commissions exist for placing workers with enterprises that need labour. In addition to serving as labour exchanges, where workers and enterprises can systematically explore openings and available workers, they organize recruitment of wage labour, develop proposals for the employment of persons not currently employed (for example, housewives, older people) and participate in decisions for the location of new industries.<sup>47</sup> In the early 1970s about half of new labour came through the use of these exchanges, the remainder was directly negotiated between individual workers and enterprises, through media advertising, posted openings and word of mouth. The average time between jobs in the Russian Republic of the USSR in the early 1970s was about 12-15 days; and less in most other Republics where the



labour shortage was even more severe. About 60% of dismissed workers were able to find new employment within ten days of their dismissal.<sup>48</sup>

Since unemployment is not seen as a problem unemployment benefits are limited to two weeks termination pay, given regardless of reason for termination, and, as already noted, free retraining, with a stipend to cover living expenses during any necessary retraining period and for workers declared redundant. In the US, those workers made redundant are entitled to up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits, conditional upon actively seeking work; at times of, and in areas of high unemployment, this period may be extended to 39 weeks. About 80% of workers in the US are eligible for these unemployment benefits. In 1977, weekly payment averaged 37% of the former weekly wage.<sup>49</sup> Workers who leave voluntarily, dismissed for 'misconduct' or 'refusal to obey orders', or who are engaged in a 'labour dispute' are either excluded from any benefits, or eligible for limited payments only. Benefits, eligibility requirements and duration of payments, etc. vary among the various States. In contrast to the USSR, where there is a shortage of labour, the consistently high unemployment rate in the USA, the low level and short duration of unemployment benefits, and conditions for eligibility, together with the right of an enterprise to dismiss a worker for almost any reason at any time, clearly indicates that job security in the USSR is much higher than in the USA.

Not only is a job considered to be a worker's right, but also working is considered to be a social duty. Soviet law stipulates that no one can live from rents, speculation, profits or black marketing, as such activities are considered to be living off the labour of another – social parasitism. Living off savings or being supported by parents, friends or spouses is, however, *not* illegal. There is no law requiring everyone to work, but social pressure is applied against people who live for lengthy periods without themselves working.<sup>50</sup>

With few exceptions, workers are free to leave their jobs at any time, only during the War emergency and reconstruction from 1940 to 1950 was this right suspended. The constraints on the workers' total freedom to determine where they will work are that for three years graduates of institutions of higher education must work at a job determined by the state, to be selected by the new graduate from a list of vacant positions. In fact, however, this requirement is not strictly enforced, and it is not uncommon for graduates to refuse or to leave such assignments without incurring any penalty. The second exception has been the use of compulsory job assignments in lieu of gaol, especially for minor criminals; this is in accordance with official ideology that productive labour is a good cure for anti-social behaviour and attitudes, and is more effective than confinement. These two forms of compulsory labour assignment account for only a very small portion of total Soviet jobs.

The eight hour day and the five day working week have been standard since the late 1960s. The 1977 Soviet Constitution sets the maximum work week at 41 hours. Overtime work is restricted, and generally is not



permitted except under exceptional circumstances such as: work 'necessary for the defence of the Republic' or for 'averting public disasters or dangers'; 'socially essential' work (for example, transport, water supply, electric power); 'repair and maintenance work where its interruption would put a significant number of workers out of work'; and, 'on the necessary completion of work begun which if not finished during a continuous working period would result in damage to machinery or materials'.<sup>51</sup> Enterprise managers have, however, been known to ignore such regulations and to pressure workers to work overtime — they have also been publicly criticized and penalized for such behaviour.<sup>52</sup> In the USA, overtime is normally compulsory, at the discretion of the employer, although by law it must usually be reimbursed at 1.5 times the normal wage rate; in the USA compulsory overtime at peak production times is common.

Three weeks paid annual vacation is the statutory standard throughout the Soviet Union, also workers may take additional, unpaid leave. In 1968 the national average number of holidays was 20.9 days per year. Some categories of workers receive additional paid leave, including certain workers in research, education and cultural institutions and those in especially dangerous and difficult occupations.<sup>53</sup> There are no legal requirements for paid holidays in the USA although union contracts, which cover about one in four workers, typically stipulate them, and some other non-union employers grant them voluntarily — usually as a reward for length of service. The only related stipulation in US law is that, under some conditions, extra wages must be paid to workers required to work on public holidays.

In the USSR those employed on night work normally work a seven, instead of a full eight-hour shift, but receive full shift pay. In certain occupations a six or seven-hour shift only is worked, at full shift pay, because of the dangerous conditions of labour (for example, coal mining) or for other special circumstances (for example, in medical practice).<sup>54</sup> Workers in potentially harmful occupations or in those involving exposure to abnormal temperatures, dirt, humidity, etc., are entitled to the provision of special protective clothing and equipment.<sup>55</sup> Soviet workers are also entitled to a miscellany of other benefits, including free or subsidized vacations, special diets, education, and job retraining, and sanatorium passes, for which there is no statutory equivalent in the USA, except in cases when the stronger unions have been able to secure some of these privileges for their members.

## **Rights of Participation in the Management of Enterprises**

Article 8 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution stipulates the right of workers to participate in the decision making processes of their 'work collectives'. It reads:

Work collectives take part in discussing and deciding state and public affairs, in planning production and social development, in training and



placing personnel, and in discussing and deciding matters pertaining to the management of enterprises and institutions, the improvement of working and living conditions and the use of funds allocated both for developing production and for social and cultural purposes and financial incentives.

The goal of Soviet industrial policy is increasingly to 'draw the workers into participation in the work of management'. This is both a realization of the Soviet notion of socialism as workers' power, and in order to encourage increases in production both through utilizing the ideas of workers developed through their practical experience, and boosting morale and productivity by giving workers a strong sense of identity with the activities of their enterprise. According to a prominent US business analyst '... there is little doubt that worker participation goes considerably beyond that found in American firms'.<sup>56</sup> Studies of socio-political involvement in Soviet factories find that about 45-50% of workers report that they participate actively and regularly in some organization in the factory and that the time spent, and the proportion of workers actively involved within the factory, have increased considerably over time.<sup>57</sup>

Workers participate in running enterprises through three major mechanisms: (1) general meetings of workers to discuss the affairs of the enterprise, and the elected representative body of all plant workers (the Permanent Production Conferences); (2) the enterprise branches of the unions; and – perhaps the most important – (3) the enterprise branch(es) of the Communist Party organization, of which workers normally compose the overwhelming majority of members. Workers' power and influence within the enterprises is also facilitated by: (1) various organizations of 'innovators' and experienced workers meeting regularly with the engineers and managers to improve production methods; (2) the organization of young workers (the Young Communist League); and (3) the fact that the rate of upward mobility between the production workers and the administration is quite high – consequently there is little difference in background, experience, life style and attitudes between the production workers and most administrators, in comparison with the West.<sup>58</sup>

## **General Enterprise Meetings and the Permanent Production Conferences**

At the general meetings of an enterprise the administrative personnel must report to the workers on their performance vis-à-vis the goals of the economic plan, as well as meet the needs and serve the interests of the workers. Managers can be and are criticized at these meetings if they fail to perform adequately. At least one pro-capitalist Western analyst of Soviet industrial relations concluded that the general production meetings were at times quite meaningful, and often quite an ordeal for the managers. Granick reports a



conversation with one industrial manager who, when asked whether workers would dare to criticize management replied: 'Any director who suppressed criticism would be severely punished. He would not only be removed, he would be tried'.<sup>59</sup> But usually, general meetings are not regarded by Western observers as very effective channels of worker involvement in decision making. Soviet leaders themselves have often expressed disappointment with the inadequate level of worker participation.<sup>60</sup> A critique of the effectiveness of general meetings of workers as mechanisms of worker participation produced in the USSR in 1957 concluded:

At many enterprises the role of production conferences is played down, they are hurriedly convened without the necessary preparation and are held chiefly in brigades and sectors. Factory and workshop meetings are rarely held, which restricts the opportunities of workers and employees [to take part] in solving questions concerning the activity of the workshop and factory as a whole.<sup>61</sup>

As a correction 'Permanent Production Conferences' were established; these are representative bodies elected at general meetings of all workers in enterprises with 100 or more workers, and on the whole are regarded as more effective than general meetings. The Permanent Production Conference comprises representatives of workers and management, representatives from the Trade Union Factory Committee, the Party branch, the Young Communist League branch and representatives of the local Scientific and Technical and Inventors and Rationalizers Societies. The Conferences in turn elect a Presidium of from five to 15 members including a chairperson and a secretary. Permanent Production Conferences participate in: drafting and discussing both current one year and long term economic plans; examining questions of organization of production, labour and wages; improving the quality and decreasing the costs of output; securing the successful working of the enterprise and the fulfilment (or over-fulfilment) of the production plan; increasing labour skills and productivity; reducing waste, idle-standing and inefficient use of machinery; and the allocation of capital investment funds, etc.<sup>62</sup> Normally, each Permanent Production Conference must meet at least once monthly, and report back to general meetings of all workers at least once every six months. Although these Conferences have led to increased worker participation, they are secondary in authority to enterprise management.

## **The Role of the Enterprise Branches of the Unions**

The enterprise union branch is an important mechanism of workers' participation in the management of their enterprises. The union branches are involved with the administrators in working out output norms, the overall production and financial plans of the enterprise, the distribution of the



enterprise funds, especially the 'socio-cultural', 'housing' and 'material incentive' funds, and the details of the work incentive plan.<sup>63</sup> Further, the unions, participate in the allocation of funds to improve working conditions as well as supervise the work of the technical and safety inspectors.<sup>64</sup> Apparently the unions do, in fact, defend worker's interests, to quote Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod:

... the causes trade union officials espouse in policy debates in the press are generally those that one would anticipate from trade union officials – better working conditions, stricter observance of labour legislation, less managerial arbitrariness, more labour safety, and so forth. In the major conflict on the degree of wage egalitarianism, the trade unions have been a strong proponent of egalitarianism.<sup>65</sup>

Local union branches hold a general meeting of all members at least once a month to discuss union business and accomplishments and problems. Local branches annually elect a leadership body – the Trade Union Factory Committee – which carries out the daily affairs of the union and reports back to the membership. Union members participate in the implementation of various union projects, such as managing social insurance funds. Local enterprise union branches also elect representatives to the city, regional, republic and union wide bodies.

The union factory branch annually negotiates a collective bargaining contract with the enterprise administrators. These contracts are, however, not concerned with wages, since wage policies are set by the central plan and established through a national agreement between the Central Council of Trade Unions and the appropriate ministries and state committees. Soviet reasoning is that wage policy must be set for the country as a whole at one time, and co-ordinated with the establishment of output priorities in order both to realize the intentions of social justice (distribution of consumer goods) and to allocate resources rationally between individual and social consumption. Decentralized wage negotiations could result in inequities between workers' wages and disparities between wages and consumer goods available, with the consequence of either inflation or shortages of goods.

The local collective bargaining agreements focus on the conditions of labour including: work norms, productivity guidelines, retraining, allocation and classification of workers, fixing workers' grades, promotional policies within the enterprise, the specifics of plan fulfilment and bonus policies and safety conditions.

If an enterprise director refuses to correct safety abuses, the unions have the right to stop production until such time he/she complies; as union inspectors may close any work place found unsafe.<sup>66</sup> Unions are responsible for increased production, and workers earn bonuses for fulfilling the planned quotas, therefore counter pressures exist on unions and workers to disregard standards of safety and hygiene. The Western press has reported a number of grievances expressed by workers against such conditions when unions



have failed to act,<sup>67</sup> as well as instances of work stoppages because of unsafe conditions.

Labour Dispute Commissions, composed equally of enterprise administrators and members of the Trade Union Factory Committee, are charged with dealing with most disputes and grievances arising between workers and administrators. These include such matters as: work transfers, payments for inadequate work, the application of output norms and rates; and payments: for time absent from work, overtime, bonuses, unused leave discharge grants; special clothing and food, wage deductions for material damages, and so on. Workers dissatisfied with the resolution of a grievance by the Labour Disputes Commission may, as in the case of dismissals, appeal to the Trade Union Factory Committee and, if they are still dissatisfied, to the regular People's Courts.<sup>68</sup> Enterprise managers may lodge an appeal against decisions of the Labour Dispute Commission or the Union Factory Committee only to the People's Courts, and only on a point of law: if it is considered that the decision runs counter to labour legislation.<sup>69</sup> Numerous labour disputes are, in fact, submitted to the courts. Western analysts have found that in about 50% of such cases the courts rule in favour of workers, against management.<sup>70</sup>

Soviet unions are not permitted to strike; the rationale for this is similar to that operating in respect to centralization of wage agreements. If workers in individual enterprises struck for higher wages or special conditions goods and privileges would accrue to those in the most strategic industries and undermine the ability of society to realize the overall economic plan. It is claimed by the Soviets that the economic plan is essentially democratically determined and operates in the interests of the working class, both as a whole, and in the long term interests of all its major segments, and thus the no strike rule is essential. On the assumption that the plan truly serves the interests of the workers, rather than of the intelligentsia, or some kind of new ruling stratum antagonistic to the working class, then clearly this principle does not operate to oppress the working class.

Western observers agree that the role and power of Soviet unions have grown since the mid-1950s, and that collective agreements have become more important as mechanisms of establishing rules and determining allocations within enterprises. Grievance machinery has become more effective. Unions have taken on increased power to plan work quotas, to check on administrators and generally to participate in enterprise management.<sup>70</sup>

The philosophy, and largely the practice of Soviet unionism is very different from either the class conscious or the militant business unionism of Western capitalist countries. The underlying philosophy is that there is an essential unity in the workers' interests in increasing production (upon which their living standards depend) and in protecting the workers' interests on the job. Thus, although concrete antagonisms arise, the fundamental interests of the enterprise directors, eg. to increase production is not in conflict with the fundamental interests of the workers. The trade unions operate to increase production, fulfil the plan, guarantee workers' participation, safety, job



security, fair treatment, and other rights. In fact, Western analysts generally report that the atmosphere in Soviet factories tends to differ from that in capitalist factories, in so far as a feeling of collectivity and a strong sense of identification with one's place of work are evident. (See the various sources cited in this section.)

## **The Role of the Enterprise Branch of the Communist Party**

The local enterprise branch of the Communist Party, composed primarily of production workers, but also including employees and directors, plays a major role as a mechanism of workers' participation in enterprise management. In industrial enterprises, not only does the substantial majority consist of Party members who are industrial workers, but roughly 20-25% of industrial workers in major enterprises are likely to be Party members; members are recruited into the Party after consultation with the other workers in the enterprise. It should be noted that, in the 1970-80 period, 58% of *all* new Party members were workers and the percentage was substantially higher in industrial areas.<sup>71</sup>

The Party has fundamental responsibility for general political guidance on all levels of enterprise activity, as opposed to concrete administration. Probably, in practice, the power of the factory Party organizations is comparable to that of the enterprise directors, although focused in a different area.

The general meetings of the enterprise Party branches as well as the Party executive committees they elect, play a central role in guiding the operation of the enterprises.<sup>72</sup> General branch meetings of the Party hear reports on all aspects of the enterprises' performance as well as suggestions and criticism of non-party workers. The Party organization has access to all enterprise documents to aid it in its supervisory work.<sup>73</sup> Local Party branches also exert considerable influence through their various specialized commissions in the factories. Such commissions include those on such matters as new technology, quality control and fulfilment of the plan.<sup>74</sup>

The Party plays a central role in the selection and evaluation of the enterprise directors. Typically, the appointment of all administrative personnel has to be ratified by the enterprise Party committee (this is the practice known as *nomenklatura*). The norm is that before there can be any appointments or promotion of people in authority there must be a prior discussion with the work force as a whole or with their representative bodies, usually under the guidance of the Party's enterprise committee.<sup>75</sup> In the 1970s there was a significant debate in the Soviet Union about whether or not the work force as a whole should have the right actually to elect their enterprise's administrators, rather than simply be consulted as part of the selection process.

Further, the local Party, together with the Young Communist League and representatives of the trade unions, form an 'Attestation Committee' which



monitors the administrators' performance. This Committee is empowered to remove directors from their positions if their performance is unsatisfactory as well as to have them transferred or rewarded.<sup>76</sup>

## **Job Rights in the USA**

Workers in the USA have considerably fewer rights than workers in the USSR. Generally the rights of US workers are limited to: (1) organizing into a union and bargaining collectively with their employers (written into law in 1935 with the passage of the Wagner Act, a right exercised by less than 25% of the US labour force in 1980), (2) a safe work place (largely guaranteed since 1970 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration); (3) not to be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex or national origin (guaranteed in the Civil Rights Act of 1964); and (4) certain rights to wages (minimum wage, overtime, as well as some protection for money put into pension funds), mostly guaranteed by the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Outside these four areas workers have almost no rights, and can be dismissed, demoted, or otherwise reassigned or punished by employers at will, except when a collective bargaining agreement exists, signed with a union by an employer restricting the employer's rights.

Workers in the USA are neither guaranteed employment, nor, once employed, do they acquire any rights in their particular job. An essential aspect of private capitalism is that the owners and managers of enterprises maintain fundamental control over assignment, hiring and dismissal of workers, in order to allocate their resources to maximize their profits. Even strong unions make few inroads into the basic management prerogatives, except in the areas of seniority and procedures for promotion or dismissal. Seniority establishes priority in layoffs, and often in promotions too. In unionized industries seniority is the nearest equivalent to the Soviet statutory provision of guaranteed employment and vested rights in a job.

US workers have no statutory rights to participate in management, and only rarely do collective bargaining agreements significantly infringe on management prerogatives in running enterprises. Workers are considered the 'agents' of owners and managers, and thus, as the means whereby to make profits for capital.

Except in exercising the four types of job rights guaranteed to US workers by law, there are no formal freedoms guaranteed to workers (as there is in the USSR). Workers can be dismissed or otherwise punished for their statements or other activities, on or off the job, if these should displease their employer. The only protected activities for workers in the private sector are those in pursuit of unionization or union activity, or in securing rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Civil Rights Act or Fair Labor Standards Act. Workers in the state sector, however, do have rights of speech and association, even if these displease their employer: state



workers cannot be dismissed for reasons of their beliefs, nor statements and political activities. In 1974 the US Supreme Court extended the legally guaranteed right of free speech to those companies 'deeply involved' in work for the federal government.<sup>77</sup>

Generally, US workers may not refuse an employer's orders even if to carry through such orders is considered by an employee to be immoral, improper or even illegal, with the exception of engaging in sexual relations — sexual harassment — against which protection does exist. The employer maintains his right to dismiss any worker who refuses to obey such orders; even if an employer commits a crime, workers dismissed for refusing to participate in it will not necessarily be reinstated.<sup>78</sup>

Employers are entitled to examine the contents of an employee's locker, desk, files, or other personal effects whether or not he or she is present and with or without their permission.<sup>79</sup>

The National Labor Relations Board in the US guarantees workers in most industries the right to have a union with which management must 'bargain in good faith', provided that a majority of workers in the appropriate 'bargaining unit' vote for a union to represent them.<sup>80</sup> In the US the state places restrictions upon what can be included in a collective bargaining agreement. The law prohibits the inclusion in such a contract such matters as: an agreement to hire members of a union only (the closed shop); in about 40% of the States of the US, the requirement that after a certain period of time, all employees must join a union (the union shop); an agreement that an employer must discharge an employee (for any reason other than non-payment of dues in a union shop where such is legal); agreements to select the employer's collective bargaining representatives; agreements not to handle the products of a third party (i.e. so called 'hot-cargo' agreements which prohibit the employers from handling the goods of firms considered 'unfair' by the union). The state also prohibits many forms of labour activity, such as sympathy strikes, secondary boycotts, picketing and mass picketing, even when there is no imminent threat of violence. The US government prohibits strikes over matters relating to jurisdiction, strikes by federal employees, and, for up to 80 days, strikes in sectors deemed by the President to be crucial for the economy.

The US government stipulates matters that collective bargaining may concern itself with if either party wants it discussed — so called 'mandatory items'. These include wages, safety, benefits, discharge, shift differentials, vacations, holidays, hours, strikes, etc. There is no requirement that any particular outcome has to be reached on such items, only that they must be discussed and that it is legal to strike over them. There are items which are considered neither 'mandatory' or illegal. These so called 'voluntary' items may be included in a collective bargaining agreement but only when acceptable to both parties. If management refuses to discuss such items the union is prohibited by law from striking over them. Such items excluded by law from inclusion in agreements, unless management agrees to them without coercion, cover, for example, agreements for the union to ratify promotions



or demotions in the supervisory ranks; requirements that the company contribute to industry-wide funds, or strike insurance funds; the prices a company charges for food in its cafeteria.<sup>81</sup>

Once a US labour agreement is signed it has the force of law (unlike many European countries, such as the UK) and is enforceable in the courts. Generally the union abandons the right to strike during the duration of the contract and, as well, commits its members to specified conditions of labour. Strikes in violation of the contract are thus illegal, and participants as well as the union itself are subject to legal penalties.<sup>82</sup>

In the area of occupational health and safety, US workers, since 1970, have greater protection than their Soviet counterparts. The Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1970 requires that every employer 'shall' provide their employees with a place in which they can work free from 'known perils'. Employers must by law furnish a work environment free from recognized hazards that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical damage. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) set up by the Act has developed detailed criteria to safeguard employees covering virtually all aspects of the work environment. These criteria deal with a wide range of practices, means, methods, operations and processes, both those applying to highly diversified employments ('horizontal standards') and those applicable only to specific employments ('vertical standards'). OSHA's rules are both specific (mandating specific safe practices) and result oriented (leaving it to the employer to devise the specific means whereby an acceptable level of safety or toxicity is obtained). The tendency over time has been for result oriented programmes to grow at the expense of those that impose specific practices on employers. The two most important aspects of safety rights under the OSHA law are those dealing with toxic substances and hazardous physical agents, and the requirement of protective guards for machines.<sup>83</sup>

The Soviet Constitution, as well as legislation, specifies that a safe working environment should be provided, but although the unions have the power to implement this legal right (including the power to refuse to work in unsafe conditions), most observers report that the general safety and toxicity standards in Soviet enterprises is less rigorous than in the US.

## Conclusion

Generally, the Soviet system of economic rights is considerably more advanced than that either in the USA or Western capitalist countries at a similar level of economic development, although the social welfare systems of many Northern European capitalist countries, with considerably wealthier economies, are comparable in many respects. The Soviet system is especially advanced in the area of job rights; tremendous advances over their own past have been made in providing basic economic security and adequate standard of living for their working people.



The Soviet system's accomplishments in the provision of economic and social benefits is generally conceded even by most dissidents and emigrés. Once they have settled in the West, emigrés frequently express stronger support for the Soviet system of health, education and social security than they did upon emigration. The writings of dissidents demonstrate that their criticisms are not of the welfare services and job rights, but of the political system. To quote from a study of emigré attitudes:

It is evident from both the quantitative data and the qualitative impressions gathered from the personal interviews, that the refugees most favour those aspects of the Soviet system which cater to their desire for welfare benefits. Such institutions form the corner-stone of the type of society they would like to live in.<sup>84</sup>

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## 6. The Land of the Free

The remainder of this book is devoted primarily to an examination of the most central (for Westerners) and controversial aspect of human rights: the question of civil liberties. This chapter examines the history of formal civil liberties in the US, and in the following chapter the history of civil liberties (tolerance and repression) in the USSR from the Bolshevik Revolution to the mid-1950s is examined. The penultimate chapter deals with the level of tolerance and repression and the situation of the dissident movement in the USSR in the last generation. In the final chapter an attempt is made to generalize from the experience of the US and the USSR since their respective revolutions to the present, in order to develop a general theory of the variation (comparatively and over time) in the degree of tolerance/repression or civil liberties in *any* society.

This present chapter attempts to show that, in fact, there has been no qualitative difference between the civil liberties granted to those who attack the fundamental institutions of US society and the civil liberties granted to those who attack the fundamental institutions of any other society. Whenever dissidence has threatened to promote mass-based assaults on the prevailing property and state system, or the ability of the state to mobilize for external war or intervention, it has been repressed in the US as surely and thoroughly as it has been in the Soviet Union (see the following two chapters). Such is the nature of *any* state.

### The American Revolution and Civil Liberties

During the American War of Independence from Great Britain (1775-83) there were few civil liberties for Loyalists in areas controlled by the rebels. In this respect, as well as others, the birth of the American Republic was no different from any other revolutionary war.

There was considerable Loyalist sympathy among the colonists. Approximately one-third of white adults sympathized with the crown and supported British rule against the Americans. It has been estimated that between 30,000 and 50,000 Americans served with the British army against the revolutionaries. In 1780 there were perhaps 8,000 Loyalists in the British



regular army while Washington's army numbered only 9,000.<sup>1</sup> Loyalists were active in all aspects of mobilization and support of the British cause, as well as in direct military actions against the independence forces. Because the exercise of speaking, writing, and of other civil liberties in support of the King endangered the rebel cause, these 'human rights' were suppressed. Everywhere there was unlimited freedom to support the rebel cause, but support of the King, or even criticism of the rebels, brought tar and feathers, if not gaol. 'Liberty of speech belonged solely to those who spoke the speech of liberty.'<sup>2</sup>

Repression of loyalist sentiments began in the mid-1760s with the formation of the Sons of Liberty, who engaged in 'patriotic' violence and intimidation against Tory publishers and other vocal supporters of the King. Boycotts, riotous demonstrations, and mob violence became the fate of authors of articles, pamphlets and newspapers that reflected support of Britain.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in 1775, states started passing legislation making it a seditious act to libel or defame Congress or the state assemblies; by 1778 all states had such legislation. Eight states formally banished prominent Tories.<sup>4</sup> In 1776, the Congress urged all the states to enact laws to prevent people from being 'deceived and drawn into erroneous opinion'.<sup>5</sup> Loyalty tests and oaths became common. Those who refused to swear that 'the war of the Colonies was just and necessary' and 'renounce all allegiance and obedience to George III and promise fair and true allegiance' to his State were subject to political, legal and civil punishments, including disenfranchisement, loss of legal rights, confiscation of property, banishment, disarming, special taxes, loss of jobs and imprisonment. To practice a profession one had to secure a certificate of loyalty. In all states, Tories were deprived of the right to vote and prohibited from holding any office. Basic civil rights, such as the right to buy or sell land, travel, or serve on a jury, were denied to Tories in most states.<sup>6</sup>

Denunciation of the patriot cause or utterance of remarks deemed to undermine it were severely punished. Legislation was common which imposed penalties from heavy fines or gaol sentences to death and forfeiture of property for utterance of opinions denying the independent authority of the new states and asserting the sovereignty of the King.<sup>7</sup> Loyalists were banned from the teaching profession.<sup>8</sup> They were forcibly moved en masse from lesser to greater secure areas, especially when an area was under threat from the British. For example, Rhode Island forcibly relocated some of its Loyalists to the northern part of the state, and New York and New Jersey's Loyalists were shifted to Connecticut.<sup>9</sup> In 1777 the Continental Congress advised the states to confiscate Loyalist estates. All the states levied special taxes on, or confiscated, considerable numbers of Loyalist properties, including the large Loyalist landed properties in the Hudson River valley.<sup>10</sup>

As the crisis between Britain and the colonies deepened after 1765, newspapers and printers came under increasing pressure to ban Loyalist or even neutralist material. By 1774, only Boston and New York had a Loyalist Press, and in 1775 only New York. Violence and boycott had done its work



even before the Declaration of Independence.<sup>11</sup> During the revolution, Committees of Censorship were set up. The Newport Committee of Inspection justified its suppression of Loyalist printed material by arguing that freedom of the press meant freedom to print 'liberal sentiments', but not 'wrong sentiments respecting the measures now carrying on for the recovery and establishment of our rights'.<sup>12</sup>

Editors who dared to publish articles critical of the rebels had their presses destroyed and were banished and imprisoned. In early 1776 the printer of a Loyalist tract in New York City had his press broken into and the plates and copies destroyed. Every printer in New York immediately received a copy of the following communique:

Sir, if you print, or suffer to be printed in your press anything against the rights and liberties of America, or in favor of our inveterate foes, the King, Ministry, and Parliament of Great Britain, death and destruction, ruin and perdition, shall be your portion. Signed, by order of the Committee of tarring and feathering Legion.

After this, there were no more Loyalist publications printed in New York City.<sup>13</sup>

The American revolutionaries systematically employed revolutionary terror to intimidate Loyalists and inspire revolutionary sentiments. General Nathanael Greene, commander of the American Southern Continental Army from 1780 to 1783, instructed his commanders that the American partisans were 'to strike terror into our enemies and give spirit to our friends'. Greene described a partisan raid against Loyalist supporters as follows. 'They made a dreadful carnage of them, upward on one hundred were killed and most of the rest cut to pieces. It has had a very happy effect on those disaffected persons of which there are too many in this country.'<sup>14</sup> Greene's scientific understanding of the role of terror in a revolutionary situation in intimidating counter-revolutionaries, while inspiring the morale of the revolutionaries, has been understood by other revolutionaries before and since.

Not until after the War of 1812 did the various laws discriminating against Tories finally disappear from the statute books.<sup>15</sup> The conclusion of peace with Great Britain did not mean the end of persecution of the Loyalists, in fact in some areas persecution increased. Loyalists who had fled or been banished, and tried to return to their homes, often met violence, public humiliation, imprisonment, deportation and even death. Loyalists who were allowed to settle peacefully in their old home areas were often fined and denied political rights.<sup>16</sup>

A great many Loyalists fled (or were forced out of) rebel areas. There was a total of between 80,000 and 100,000 Loyalist refugees who left the 13 colonies during the Revolution, about 4% of the white population (compared to one-half of 1% who left France during the French Revolution).<sup>17</sup> Thousands fled New York City in panic when the British withdrew; New York had been a haven of Loyalist refugees from Revolutionary persecution



and terror throughout the Revolutionary War. In one month alone, 170 ships overcrowded with Tory 'boat people' fled the impending occupation of the city by the Revolutionaries 'on their top-heavy decks were huddled a wretched throng of soldiers and refugees'.<sup>18</sup> Some Loyalists returned to Great Britain, some other nationals returned to their original homelands, some settled in the Caribbean, but about half ended up in Canada: about 35,000 in Nova Scotia and 7,000 in what was to become Ontario. Until 1798, Loyalists continued to migrate to Canada, especially upper Canada. By 1812 about 80% of all white inhabitants of upper Canada had been born in the US (80% of these having left the US since 1783). Loyalist ideology, formed by the experience of persecution and refugee status, long remained a potent force in Canadian nationalism.<sup>19</sup> The Loyalist flight out of revolutionary America was comparable to that of the flow of anti-revolutionaries after many other revolutions since that time, for example, China, Russia, Vietnam, Eastern Europe. But it should be noted that of 20th Century revolutions only the Cuban (as a matter of deliberate policy) has produced, relatively, a significantly higher number of permanent refugees than did the American Revolution. The percentage of refugees from China or Russia was lower than that reached after the American Revolution. There were, for example, about 2.5 million refugees from the Russian Revolution – almost 1.5% of that country's population.<sup>20</sup>

## **Federalists vs Jeffersonians: 1798–1808**

In this period of American history there was sharp conflict between the forces that sponsored the US Constitution – with its centralization of powers, aristocratic orientation, hostility to the interests of small farmers and favour towards the slave owners and wealthy merchants who were the backbone of the ruling Federalist Party, which was hostile to the democratic influences of the French Revolution – and the Jeffersonian Republicans supported by the small farmers who had resisted the implementation of the Constitution, favouring instead greater popular democracy. The Jeffersonians were generally sympathetic to developments in France. In the face of rising public support for the Jeffersonians and growing disenchantment with Federalist principles, the Federalist administration of John Adams attempted to repress criticism through the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.<sup>21</sup> The sedition act punished 'false, scandalous and malicious writings' against the government. The text of its most relevant section follows:

Section 2 . . . That if any person shall write, print, utter or publish, or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered, or published, or shall knowingly and willingly assist or aid in writing, etc. . . . any false, scandalous, and malicious writings against the government of the United States, or either House of the Congress . . . or the President, with intent to bring them into contempt or disrepute or to excite



against them . . . the hatred of the good people of the United States, or to stir up sedition in the United States, or to excite any unlawful combination therein for opposing or resisting any law . . . or any act of the President of the United States done in pursuance of any such law, or of the powers vested in him by the Constitution . . . or to resist, oppose, or defeat any such law or act, or to aid, encourage, or abet any hostile designs of any foreign nation, against the United States, their people, or government, then such person, being thereof convicted before any court in the United States having jurisdiction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, and by imprisonment not exceeding two years.<sup>22</sup>

President Adams eagerly urged its enforcement. An associate Justice of the US Supreme Court who presided over some of the Sedition Act trials, argued 'that falsehoods and scandals against the government should be punished with becoming rigour'.<sup>23</sup>

The Alien and Sedition Acts were used by the Federalists against newspaper editors and other prominent personalities who were enemies of their party. Twenty-five persons were arrested between 1798 and 1801 under the sedition law, eleven cases came to trial and ten persons were convicted. The most important of the prosecutions were against the leading Republican newspapers in the country: *The Aurora* (Philadelphia), *The Examiner* (Richmond), *The Argus* (New York) and *The Independent Chronicle* (Boston).<sup>24</sup> The trials against the leading Republican newspaper editors were heavily biased against the defendants with prejudiced Federalist judges closely guiding the proceeding and juries selected on account of their Federalist sympathies.<sup>25</sup>

The greatest punishment enacted under the Sedition Act, however, was not against a newspaper publisher, but against a labour radical, David Brown, who, in October 1798, erected a liberty pole in Dedham, Massachusetts, with the words: 'No Stamp Act, no Sedition Act, no alien bills, no land tax, downfall to the tyrants of America, peace and retirement to the President, long live the vice-President and the minority; may moral virtue be the basis of civil government.' As a result he was arrested and sentenced to 18 months in gaol.<sup>26</sup>

When the Jeffersonians displaced the Federalists in 1801, all those who were in prison under the Sedition Act were pardoned and all fines were eventually repaid (some not until 1850) by Congress. Once in power, however, the Jeffersonians began to repress the Federalist editors, just as previously they themselves had been repressed, but not by means of the Sedition Act, which expired in 1801. In 1804, a Federalist printer in New York, Croswell, was indicted for 'scandalizing, traducing and vilifying' the President and for 'alienating from him the obedience, fidelity and allegiance of the citizens of New York' by printing a 'malicious libel' in his paper. In Connecticut, in 1806, a federal grand jury returned indictments of seditious libel against a Superior Court judge and the editors of the Federalist



Connecticut *Courant* — a total of six people.<sup>27</sup>

Sedition laws did not die with the resolution of the conflict between the Federalists and Jeffersonians. A number of state governments themselves passed sedition acts. For example, Tennessee, in 1817, passed the following act:

Whoever shall be guilty of uttering seditious words or speeches, spreading abroad false news, writing or dispersing scurrilous libels against the state or general government, disturbing or obstructing any lawful officer in executing his office, or of instigating others to cabal and meet together, to contrive, invent, suggest, or incite rebellious conspiracies, riots, or any manner of unlawful feud or differences, thereby to stir the people up maliciously to contrive the ruin and destruction of the peace, safety, and order of the Government, or shall knowingly conceal such evil practices, shall be punished by fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the court and jury trying the case, and may be compelled to give good and sufficient security for his or her good behavior during the courts' pleasure, and shall be incapable of bearing any office of honor, trust, or profit in the State government for the space of three years. It shall be the duty of the judge to give this section in charge to the grand jury, and no prosecutor shall be required to an indictment under this section.<sup>28</sup>

## **The Conflict over Slavery and Civil Liberties: 1830–77**

The denial of basic civil liberties during this period was extensive. The most blatant repression of the 'human rights' of speech, assembly, publication, movement, etc., was the denial of even a semblance of civil liberties to the slaves in the plantation system, in both the seceding and non-seceding states. There were fundamental restrictions on the formal liberties both of white abolitionists and anti-secessionist forces in the South, and pro-Southern forces in the North, as well as on the liberties of anti-Reconstruction forces in the South after 1865.

### **The Abolitionists**

Until 1828, agitation against slavery in the South was tolerated. But after 1828 the various Southern states initiated laws prohibiting speaking or publishing against slavery, and mob violence against abolitionists (informally sanctioned by the Southern states) became prevalent. A typical Southern law read: 'If a person by speaking or writing maintains that owners have no right of property in their slaves, he shall be confined in gaol not more than one year and fined not exceeding \$500.' Virginia, in the 1850s, passed legislation banning publications which tended to incite insurrections, under penalty of death. In the 1830s, a teacher of botany, Dr Reuben Crandall was gaoled in Washington, DC, for eight months for possession and lending



of anti-slavery papers. From 1828 to 1860, there were numerous examples of abolitionists being beaten and run out of town, their meetings being broken up, their presses smashed, and halls burned down both in the South and the North.<sup>29</sup>

Anti-slavery literature was banned from the federal mails in the South through the actions of local postmasters. In 1836, Virginia passed a law authorizing postmasters to exclude 'incendiary publications' and empowering justices of the peace to 'burn publicly' such condemned matter, and to gaol anyone knowingly subscribing to or receiving abolitionist literature. The postmaster of Lynchburg, Virginia sent the following letter to Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*:

Sir: I inform you that I shall not, in future, deliver from this office the copies of the 'Tribune' which come here, because I believe them to be of that incendiary character which are forbidden circulation by the laws of the land, and a proper regard for the safety of society. You will, therefore, discontinue them.

Respectfully,

R.H. Glass, Postmaster.<sup>30</sup>

Threats to property, in this case in human beings, was not tolerated, and the 'human rights' of critics of slavery were systematically repressed. As in all civil wars, there were no civil liberties for opponents in the American civil war.

### **War Measures**

Southern sympathizers, and even neutrals, were systematically repressed in the North. Habeas corpus was suspended by President Lincoln in April 1861 in the region between Washington and Philadelphia, and in July the suspension was extended to New York. In September 1862 there was a general suspension of the writ of habeas corpus because, according to Lincoln, 'disloyal persons are not adequately restrained by the ordinary process of law'. Lincoln's writ (ratified by Congress in March 1863), read:

During the existing insurrection . . . all rebels and insurgents, their aiders and abettors, within the United States and all persons discouraging voluntary enlistments, resisting military drafts, or guilty of any disloyal practices . . . shall be subject to martial law and liable to trials and punishments by courts-martial or military commission:

Second, that the writ of habeas corpus is suspended in respect to all persons arrested, or who are now, or hereafter during the rebellion shall be, imprisoned in any fort, camp, arsenal, military prison, or other place of confinement, by any military authority, or by the sentence of any court-martial or military commission.<sup>31</sup>

Thus the bill of rights was suspended for the duration of the war for Confederate sympathizers and neutralists. Lincoln, towards the end of the



war, justified suspension of civil liberties by arguing that it was necessary to protect the Constitution:

My oath to preserve the Constitution imposed on me the duty of preserving by every indispensable means that government, that nation, of which the Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation, and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law, life and limb must be protected, yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life, but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional, might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong I assumed this ground and I now avow it. I could not feel that to the best of my ability I had even tried to save the Constitution, if to save slavery, or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of the government, country, and Constitution, together.<sup>32</sup>

The commanders of the various military departments used their authority to suppress Confederate sympathizers by taking local measures, the most famous of which was General Order 38 of General Burnside, commander of the Department of the Ohio, which read in part '... all persons found within our lines who shall commit acts for the benefit of the enemies of our country will be tried as spies or traitors, and, if convicted, will suffer death. ... The habit of declaring sympathy for the enemy will not be allowed in this department'.<sup>33</sup>

Newspapers with Confederate sympathies were suppressed throughout the North, through imprisonment of editors and denial of the mails, as well as executive orders and the military forcibly suppressing papers or forbidding their circulation in certain areas. Henry Reeves of the Greenport, L.I. *Republican* was sent to military prison for the treasonable character of his paper. James McMaster, editor of the New York *Freeman's Appeal*, was arrested in September 1861 and charged with editing a disloyal newspaper. F.D. and J.R. Flanders of the *New York Franklin Gazette* were imprisoned without trial. James Wall, a contributor to *The New York Daily News* (which was suppressed by banning from the US mails) was arrested and placed in military prison because of the pro-Southern articles he had written for that paper.<sup>34</sup> Denial of the use of the mails (any class) became a tool to suppress insufficiently patriotic papers. In addition to *The New York Daily News* excluded papers included *The South* and *The Exchange* (both from Baltimore), *The New York Day Book*, *The Brooklyn Eagle*, *The New York Journal of Commerce* and *The Freeman's Journal*.<sup>35</sup> The Postmaster General of the US argued in defence of the banning of pro-Confederate or neutralist papers from the mails, as follows:

The freedom of the press is secured by high constitutional sanction. But it is freedom and not license. ... It cannot aim blows at the



Government and the Constitution . . . and at the same time claim its protection. While, therefore, this department neither enjoyed nor claimed the power to suppress such treasonable publications, but left them free to publish what they pleased, it could not be called upon to give them circulation. The mails established by the United States could not upon any known principle of law or public right, be used for its destruction. . . . I would not, except in time of war, have adopted the arguments of my predecessors. . . . These citations show that a course of precedents has existed for twenty-five years — known to Congress, not annulled or restrained by act of Congress — in accordance with which newspapers and other printed matter decided by the postal authorities to be insurrectionary or treasonable, or in any degree exciting to treason or insurrection, have been excluded from the mails . . . solely by authority of the executive administration. This under the rules as settled by the supreme court . . . as applicable to the executive construction of laws with whose execution the departments are specially charged, would establish my action as within the legal construction of the postal acts. . . . <sup>36</sup>

The Army of the Republic directly suppressed pro-Confederate papers. In St. Louis *The Missouri State Journal*, *The Herald* and *The Evening News* were suspended. All newspapers in Missouri, except those in St. Louis, had to furnish advance copy of each issue to the army for inspection before they could go to press. *The Chicago Times* was suppressed in June 1863 by order of the Department of the Ohio. In May 1864 *The Baltimore Evening Transcript* was suppressed and *The Cincinnati Enquirer* was forbidden to circulate in Kentucky, by order of the military.<sup>37</sup>

From February 1862 to the end of the war approximately 13,500 civilians were arrested and confined in *military* prisons for activities in support of the Confederacy. In addition there were many imprisonments in state and Federal prisons. The total number of Northern political prisoners of all categories was approximated 38,000.<sup>38</sup>

### **Reconstructing the South**

Between March and July 1867 the US Congress passed legislation putting the South under military rule (The Reconstruction Acts). The rebel states were divided into five military districts with all civil and judicial power invested in the army, either to be exercised directly or indirectly through supervising civilian administrations. Under army supervision a general registration of voters took place, with only those able to prove that they did not participate in the rebellion eligible to register. The anti-rebel electorate so created was authorized to elect delegates to constitutional conventions in each state to write new constitutions (generally far more democratic than previous state constitutions) and elect a legislature. Once such reconstructed states satisfied the army and Washington, they were readmitted into the Union. Until Congress had admitted those elected as representatives the



state governments remained provisional.<sup>39</sup> The electorate that came into being as a result of the Reconstruction Acts consisted of a total of 700,000 Blacks and 660,000 whites. It is estimated that a total of almost 200,000 active Confederates were disenfranchised.<sup>40</sup> Those who participated in the Confederacy were also barred from holding office, both in the new, reconstructed states, and as their representatives to Washington.

In 1872 an amnesty act reduced the number of disqualified Confederates (who were denied political rights) from between 150,000 and 200,000 to between 300 and 400. In general, however, leading Confederates, although deprived of political rights, were treated leniently, certainly compared to the working-class and peasant rebels who were repressed in other civil wars (e.g. the Paris Commune of 1871). Only one Confederate Captain Henry Wirz, the commander of the Confederate prisoner of war camp at Andersonville, Georgia – was executed. Many leading confederates were gaoled for relatively short periods. But even the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, served only two years in gaol. General Lee was not imprisoned at all, although his citizenship was not restored until the mid 1970s.<sup>41</sup>

During the reconstruction period the military government of the South limited freedom of the press. In many states newspapers were suppressed and pressured not to oppose reconstruction policy.<sup>42</sup>

In response to the organized violence and intimidation of the Ku Klux Klan during the reconstruction period, the military intervened to suppress the organization. In 1871, President Grant declared martial law in nine counties of South Carolina suspending habeus corpus and arresting between 500 and 600 persons. Between 1870 and 1876 there were 1,200 convictions for interfering with the political and civil rights of citizens.<sup>43</sup>

As in all civil wars, there were refugees. Many secessionist leaders and confederate officials, fearing harsh treatment, fled the country, along with numerous slave owners who migrated to the slave holding areas of Latin America (mostly Cuba and Brazil).<sup>44</sup>

In 1878 and 1879, with the withdrawal of the Army from the South and the overthrow of the Reconstruction governments and the consequent reduction of the Black population to semi-slave status, many Blacks attempted to flee the South. A systematic effort was made by plantation owners and local government officials to prevent this emigration. River crossings were blocked and Blacks attempting to leave the South were forcibly returned to the areas they had left, this in order to guarantee the plantation labour force. Needless to say, there were few effective civil liberties or political rights for Black people in the South from the end of Reconstruction until the 1860s; especially after the 1890s when Blacks were almost completely disenfranchised.

## **The Repression of the Working-Class Movement: 1886-1914**

With the rapid growth of the industrial working class, and the spread of



anarchist and socialist ideas and organizations, as well as militant trade unionism in this class, repression (including the denial of basic civil liberties) exercised by the powers that controlled the US state as a mechanism to contain the growing danger to their hegemony grew in importance. In the US state militias had been used against strikes as early as 1828; but the first massive use of federal troops was to suppress the spontaneous strikes and large scale rioting that occurred in working-class districts throughout Northern cities in the summer of 1877.

In America, the first 'red scare' and general repression of the working-class left occurred in 1886 and 1887 in the aftermath of a general strike in Chicago for the eight hour working day. The strike, which began on 1 May 1886, together with the repression that followed, became such a cause celebre in the world-wide socialist and union movement, that it became an annual one day event throughout most of the world. Today its official commemoration is as a public holiday in all the socialist countries, as well as in many others. At a rally in Chicago on 4 May 1886, called to protest at the killing of strikers by the Chicago police, a still unidentified person threw a dynamite bomb into the ranks of the police killing a number of them. In the anti-radical hysteria that followed, the leadership of the anarchist working-class movement in Chicago was arrested and charged with murder, not on the basis of actually having any involvement in the incident, but for preaching anarchist ideology which, allegedly, inspired whoever did the deed. Two of those who were tried, Albert Parsons and George Engel, were not even at the rally when the bomb was thrown. However, these two anarchist leaders, along with two others, were hung, having been convicted at various times in the past of having 'uttered and printed incendiary and seditious language, practically advising the killing of policemen, etc. . . ' <sup>45</sup>

The arrest of the Chicago anarchists was followed by police raids on radical homes, headquarters, and presses all over the city. Chicago's gaols were packed, the presses of foreign language newspapers were smashed and the offices of trade unions and other working class organizations were ransacked. Police in other cities soon followed suit as a national 'red scare' hysteria spread. The entire executive board of the Knights of Labor in Milwaukee was arrested and charged with 'rioting and conspiracy', four officers of the Knights of Labor in Pittsburgh were arrested and charged with conspiracy, and the executive board of District 75 of the Knights of Labor in New York, which was engaged in a strike against the Third Avenue Elevated, was also arrested. The Knights of Labor suffered grievously from the suppression and hostile publicity generated by this first national red scare, and soon after folded as an effective labour organization.

States began to use martial law to suppress strikes in 1892. Declarations of martial law allowed the imprisonment of hundreds of strikers without charges, and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. In order to suppress strikes martial law was declared in Colorado on ten separate occasions. At Cripple Creek, Colorado in 1903-04, 1,000 troops were sent into the town. The militia immediately rounded up 600 strikers and held them for weeks



without charge or trial, denying writs of habeas corpus. During the 1903-04 strike a total of 1,345 people were arrested and held. General Sherman Bell, commander of the militia, was made famous by his response to lawyers' writs when he said, 'Habeas corpus, hell. We'll give 'em post mortems', and his equally famous 'To hell with the Constitution! We're not following the Constitution!'<sup>46</sup>

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1892 saw a similar event. Martial law was declared by the government during a miners' strike and the militia arrested 500 strikers. Seventy-five (almost none of whom were charged with any crime) were held for months before being released. Again, in a second massive Coeur d'Alene strike in 1899, the militia went even further; this time over 1,000 miners were confined by the military.<sup>47</sup>

The Federal Industrial Relations Committee, in its 1915 report, argued that strikers were regularly arrested without having violated laws, 'charged with fictitious crimes, held under excessive bail, and treated frequently with unexampled brutality for the purpose of injuring strikers or breaking the strike'. In summarizing the arrest of 2,238 persons charged with unlawful assembly or disorderly conduct during a strike in Paterson, New Jersey, the report found that the right of bail was generally denied, and when granted was set at the prohibitive level of \$500 to \$5,000, and that men were arrested for 'ridiculous reasons, as for example, standing on the opposite side of the street and beckoning men in the mills to come out.'<sup>48</sup> In the Lawrence textile strike of 1912 there were 900 arrests with detainees denied bail.<sup>49</sup>

Denial of freedom to speak in public or to distribute literature in public was frequently used by authorities to suppress radical activities. In response to being banned on the public streets of many Western towns and cities, the Industrial Workers of the World, from 1909 to 1912, engaged in a number of 'Free Speech Fights' in which their tactic was for one person after another to mount a speaker's platform and be arrested, until the gaols were overflowing with 'Wobblies'. Nationwide calls would go out to IWW members from all around the country to 'hop a freight' to the city where the fight was going on. The most famous of such 'free speech fights' were at Spokane, Fresno and San Diego.<sup>50</sup>

Socialist papers were suppressed during and in the aftermath of strikes. In 1888, the *Chicago Alarm* was suspended from 8 April to 14 July because of its alleged anarchistic tendencies. On 5 September 1912 the socialist paper of Butte, Montana was published with three blank columns indicating a censored piece. Copies of *The Weekly Issue* of Passaic, New Jersey, were confiscated by the police during a strike and its editor was arrested and charged with 'aiding and abetting hostility to the government'. In West Virginia during the strike of 1912-13 the military arrested and held incommunicado the editor of *The Labor Argus*. During the Coeur d'Alene strike, a local newspaper editor was arrested and detained because of material published in his paper criticizing the martial law decree on the grounds of violating the Constitution. During the Cripple Creek strike, the editor of *The Victor Record*, along with his staff and printers, who criticized the actions of



the militia were arrested and put into the 'bullpen' with the strikers.<sup>51</sup> Johann Most, a leading anarchist, was arrested in September 1901 for reprinting in his weekly *Freiheit*, an article allegedly defending political assassinations. Most was convicted of a misdemeanour based on 'breach of the peace' and 'abuse of free speech'.<sup>52</sup>

Denial of civil liberties to socialists, anarchists, militant trade unionists and their supporters became so common in this period that in 1914, the American Sociological Society devoted its entire annual meeting to 'Freedom of Communication'. The prominent, early American sociologist, Edward A. Ross (who, in 1900, had been forced to resign from Stanford University for political reasons) said:

During the last dozen years the tales of suppression of free assemblage, free press, and free speech, by local authorities or the State operating under martial law have been so numerous as to have become an old story. They are attacked at the instigation of an economically and socially powerful class, itself enjoying to the full the advantages of free communication, but bent on denying them to the class it holds within its power. . . . It is inexpressibly surprising that the rights of free communication, established so long ago at such cost of patriot blood, time-tested rights which in thousands of instances have vindicated their value for moral and social progress, accepted rights which in the minds of disinterested men are as settled as many principles of human conduct can be, should with increasing frequency be flaunted by strong employers and set at naught by local authorities.<sup>53</sup>

A number of professors besides Ross were forced out of university positions at this time because of their pro-socialist or pro-union attitudes. These included George Herron (Iowa College, 1893); E.W. Bemis (University of Chicago, 1895); E.M. Banks (University of Florida, 1911); Scott Nearing (University of Pennsylvania, 1914); and Joseph Hart (University of Washington, 1914).<sup>54</sup>

## Repression of the Left: 1917-24

Mobilization for US participation in World War I, the neutrality of the American Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World, followed by Socialist Revolution in Russia, a sympathetic response in certain immigrant worker's circles, and a wave of strikes in 1919, produced a repression as ruthless as any in US history. The American left was systematically denied basic civil liberties in this period.

In May 1918 the US government passed a sedition act which made it a crime to utter, print, write or publish any

disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language, or language intended



to cause contempt, scorn, contumely or disrepute as regards the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution, or the flag, or the uniform of the Army or Navy, or any language intended to incite resistance to the United States or promote the cause of its enemies, urging any curtailment of production of any things necessary to the prosecution of the war with intent to hinder its prosecution or to advocate, teach, defend, or suggest the doing of any of these acts, 'and words or acts supporting or favoring the cause of any country at war with us, or opposing the cause of the United States therein.' The maximum penalty set was \$10,000 fine, 20 years imprisonment or both.<sup>55</sup>

By 1920, the majority of the states had also enacted peacetime sedition or criminal syndicalism acts directed against working-class radical activity. The model of the state peacetime sedition acts was that passed by New York State in 1902 as a result of President McKinley's assassination. This act remained a dead letter until the first prosecution under it of a leader of the New York State Socialist Party (Benjamin Gillow) in 1919. The New York Criminal Syndicalism law made it a felony to advocate by speech or writing, or to join any society or attend any meeting that taught or advocated 'the doctrine that organized government should be overthrown by force or violence, or by assassination . . . , or by any unlawful means.'<sup>56</sup> In 1919 and 1920 there was a wave of hastily passed state laws based on the New York model. West Virginia made criminal any teaching in sympathy with or favourable to 'ideals hostile to those now or henceforth existing under the constitution and laws of this state'. Montana made it a crime to use 'any language calculated to incite or inflame resistance to any duly constituted state authority'. Arizona made it a criminal offence to advocate the violation of 'the constitutional or statutory rights of another as a means of accomplishing industrial or political ends'. The California criminal syndicalism law passed in 1919 defines criminal syndicalism as:

Any doctrine or precept advocating, teaching or aiding and abetting the commission of crime, sabotage (which word is hereby defined as meaning wilful and malicious physical damage or injury to physical property), or unlawful acts of force and violence or unlawful methods of terrorism as a means of accomplishing a change in industrial ownership or control, or effecting any political change.<sup>57</sup>

Imprisonment of from one to fourteen years became the penalty for anyone who:

advocates, teaches, aids or abets criminal syndicalism, who wilfully attempts to justify it; who publishes or circulates any written or printed matter advocating or advising it; who organizes, assists in organizing, or knowingly becomes a member of any group organized to advocate it (without necessarily urging this doctrine himself); or who commits any



act advocated by this doctrine with intent to effect a change in industrial ownership or any political change.<sup>58</sup>

Between 1919 and 1924, 504 persons in California were arrested and held for bail of \$15,000 each under this statute, and 264 cases were tried.<sup>59</sup>

In the 1917-23 period, 33 states and a number of cities passed laws which forbade the display of a red flag. In most states the penalty for displaying the 'symbol of Communism' was a maximum of six months in gaol and/or a fine of \$500. Approximately 1,400 persons were arrested under these laws and about 300 were convicted and imprisoned.<sup>60</sup> The New York state statute made it a misdemeanour to display the red banner: 'in any public assembly or parade as a symbol or emblem of any organization or association, or in furtherance of any political, social, or economic principle, doctrine or propaganda.' Other states went further and forbade the display of the red flag anywhere, including private homes. Some outlawed the wearing of red neckties or buttons or the use of any emblem of any hue if it is 'distinctive of bolshevism, anarchism, or radical socialism', or indicates 'sympathy or support of ideals, institutions, or forms of government, hostile, inimical, or antagonistic to the form or spirit of the constitution, laws, ideals, and institutions of this state or of the United States.'<sup>61</sup>

There were approximately 2,000 prosecutions under the federal sedition act. During World War I and the immediate post-war period, people were tried for advocating heavier taxation instead of bond issues, for stating that conscription was unconstitutional, that the sinking of merchant vessels was legal, for urging that a referendum should have preceded the declaration of war, for saying that the war was contrary to the teachings of Christ, and for criticizing the Red Cross and the YMCA.<sup>62</sup> A Mrs Stokes was convicted for saying to a group of women 'I am for the people and the government is for the profiteers.' According to the judge of this case what is said to mothers, sisters and sweethearts may diminish their enthusiasm for the war, and 'our armies in the field and our navies upon the seas can operate and succeed only so far as they are supported and maintained by the folks at home'.<sup>63</sup> Mrs Stokes was sentenced to ten years in prison on the grounds that such a statement was '... false ... known to be false and intended and calculated to interfere with the success of our military and naval forces, that it was an attempt to cause insubordination in those forces, and it obstructed recruiting'.<sup>64</sup>

In Connecticut in 1920 a salesman was sentenced to six months in gaol for remarking to a customer that Lenin was 'the brainiest' or 'one of the brainiest' political leaders of the world. The state of Washington prohibited school teachers from answering students' questions concerning Bolshevism or 'any other heresies'.<sup>65</sup> Twenty-seven South Dakota farmers were sentenced to more than a year in prison each for petitioning various state officers for a referendum on the war. The Attorney-General declared that the convictions in this case were 'one of the greatest deterrents against the spread of hostile propaganda, and particularly that class of propaganda which advanced and



played upon the theme that this was a capitalists' war.'<sup>66</sup>

On 4 July 1919 in Oakland, California, known radicals were rounded up and gaoled because of suspicions that there would be an organized disruption on that date; for the same reason the mayor of New York suspended all meetings for the same day.<sup>67</sup> Yetta Stromberg was convicted in California under its Red Flag statute and sentenced to up to five years for displaying a flag at a socialist youth camp that symbolized opposition to government.<sup>68</sup>

The US government attempted to suppress the newly formed Communist Party. Anita Whitney was convicted under the California criminal syndicalism act in January 1920 for membership in the Communist Labor Party and attendance at its state convention in Oakland; she was sentenced to between one to 14 years.<sup>69</sup> Angelo Herndon, a Black Communist, was arrested in Atlanta, Georgia and sentenced to between 18 and 20 years in prison for being in possession of communist literature, including membership blanks, and a booklet called *The Communist Position on the Negro Question*, which argued for Black self-determination in the black belt counties of the South.<sup>70</sup> Benjamin Gitlow, one of the founders of the American Communist Party, was convicted in New York in January 1920 and sentenced to between five and ten years hard labour (of which he served three) for printing the founding manifesto of the Communist Party in the publication of which he was business manager – *Revolutionary Age*.<sup>71</sup>

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an important revolutionary union with significant influence in certain areas of industry in the period 1905–17, was systematically destroyed by state repression in the 1917–24 period.

In April 1918, 113 IWW leaders were charged in Chicago with a long list of seditious acts (an average of over 100 per defendant, or a total of over 10,000 charges). After four months of testimony, largely consisting of quotations and citations from IWW newspapers and pamphlets, the jury, after debating for about one hour, returned verdicts of guilty for *all* defendants on *all* counts. Thirty-five of the Chicago defendants were sentenced to five years in prison, 33 to ten years, and 15, including their most prominent leaders, Haywood and St. John, to 20 years. Total fines levied exceeded \$2,000,000. The majority served substantial terms at Leavenworth (although a few, including Big Bill Hayworth, skipped bail and fled the country – Haywood died in the Soviet Union, a refugee from American repression).<sup>72</sup>

The Chicago indictments were followed by mass arrests of IWW leaders in other parts of the country. Sixty-two IWW members were convicted in January 1919 in California and sentenced to between one and ten years (these defendants, along with other 'Wobblies' not tried, had been imprisoned for between ten and twelve months while awaiting trial).<sup>73</sup> Twenty-six IWW members received prison terms of between one to nine years in Wichita, Kansas in late 1918. Sixty-four 'Wobblies' were arrested in Omaha, Nebraska in November 1917, and held for a year and a half, before charges against them were dropped.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to mass arrests and imprisonment of leaders, the IWW was



subjected to numerous other forms of repression, including the banning of its publications from the US mails (not only from second class status).<sup>75</sup> Sixty-four IWW offices around the country were systematically raided by the federal government on 5 September 1917, who seized tons of official and personal correspondence, organization minutes and financial records, stickers, buttons, cards, membership lists, leaflets, pamphlets, circulars, books and office equipment, much of which was introduced as evidence in the various IWW trials. The US army directly suppressed the IWW in the Pacific Northwest. In Montana, troops raided the Flathead County IWW headquarters and held local members in confinement for several weeks without filing charges against them. In Washington state, the army raided IWW halls, closed the Spokane headquarters, broke up IWW meetings, searched freight trains for 'Wobbly' workers, arrested organizers and gaoled dozens of 'Wobblies', releasing only those 'willing to work without agitating strikes' and who the army felt would not be 'a menace to the best interests of industry'.<sup>76</sup> *De facto* martial law was implemented in the Northwest during World War I, with the courts denying writs of habeas corpus for confined IWW members.<sup>77</sup>

In September 1917 one of the leading socialist papers in the country, *The Milwaukee Leader*, was deprived of its second class mailing rights and all first class mail addressed to *The Leader* was returned to the sender. The District Court of Appeals that upheld the postmaster's decision in this case argued:

No one can read them without becoming convinced that they were printed in a spirit of hostility to our own government and in a spirit of sympathy for the Central Powers; that through them, appellants sought to hinder and embarrass the government in the prosecution of the war.<sup>78</sup>

The other leading socialist paper, *The New York Call*, received the same treatment.<sup>79</sup> The post office ban on these two newspapers lasted until December 1919 (13 months after the end of the War).<sup>80</sup> The socialist *Seattle Union Record* received worse treatment. In late 1919 the Attorney General closed its office because it urged workers to 'kick the governing class into the discard at the next election'.<sup>81</sup> In January 1920, three men were arrested in Syracuse for distributing leaflets describing ill-treatment of political prisoners and calling for an amnesty meeting. They were sentenced to 18 months in gaol for: 'disloyal language about our form of government and the military forces, language designed to bring them and the Constitution into contempt, inciting resistance to the United States, and obstruction of recruiting'.<sup>82</sup>

Numerous other left-wing publications were suppressed by the post office including the *Nation* of 14 September 1918, *The Public* (for an article suggesting higher taxes and fewer bonds); *The Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register* (for reprinting an article by Jefferson arguing that Ireland



should be a republic); *The Gaelic American* (for suggesting that the Irish were not enthusiastic about fighting for Britain); *The Irish World* (for stating that the trend of French life and ideals had, for a century, been toward materialism); and *The Masses*. After suppressing the August number of *The Masses*, the Postmaster refused to admit any future issues to the second class mailing privilege on the ground that the magazine had skipped a number. Books such as Thorstein Veblen's *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution*, Latzko's *Men in War*, and Lenin's *Soviets at Work*, were also banned from the mails.<sup>83</sup>

Films, too, were subjected to suppression. In 1917 the government confiscated and destroyed the prints of *The Spirit of '76* (a film which had been completed before the US entered the World War) and arrested and convicted its producer, Robert Goldstein, under the sedition act. *The Spirit of '76* celebrated the American War of Independence and, as such, not surprisingly, was critical of Great Britain (a US ally during World War I). The verdict of the judge in this case was as follows:

Great Britain is an ally of the United States. . . . this is no time . . . for the exploitation of those things that may have the tendency . . . of creating animosity or want of confidence between us and our allies, because so to do weakens our efforts, weakens the chance of our success, impairs our solidarity. . . . And it is not at all necessary that it should be shown to have such effect [of inciting hatred of England]; it is enough if it is calculated reasonably so to excite or inflame the passions of our people or some of them, as that they will be deterred from giving that full measure of co-operation, sympathy, assistance, and sacrifice which is due to Great Britain, simply because . . . Great Britain . . . is working with us to fight the battle which we think strikes at our very existence as a nation.<sup>84</sup>

Goldstein was sentenced to ten years, commuted to three.

Leftist teachers were banned from the schools. The New York Superintendent of Schools forbade the employment of teachers who belonged to the left wing of the Socialist Party. Some were fired for their beliefs. Not only Bolshevism, but also the League of Nations were banned as legitimate subjects for classroom discussion.<sup>85</sup>

On 2 January 1920, federal agents rounded up more than 4,000 radicals and alleged radicals in co-ordinated raids in 33 cities in 23 states, holding the them for deportation or charging them with seditious acts. Almost every known communist organization was raided, and virtually every known national and local communist leader was arrested. The purpose of the 'Palmer' raids was to destroy the newly formed communist parties in the US, primarily through seizing and deporting their alien members (who were a substantial proportion of their membership). Deportation was an especially efficient process, because deportation proceedings did not require the due process safeguards of criminal proceedings (no indictments, no judge, no jury, no



lawyers). Deportation was a purely administrative matter handled by the Department of Labor.<sup>86</sup>

Attorney General Palmer's instructions to his Secret Service men throughout the country began:

### INSTRUCTIONS

Our activities will be directed against the radical organizations, known as the Communist Party of America and the Communist Labor Party of America, also known as Communists.

The strike will be made promptly and simultaneously at 8.30 pm in all districts. The meeting places of the Communists in your territory, and the names and addresses of the officers and heads that you are to arrest, are on the attached lists.

You will also arrest all active members where found.

Particular efforts should be made to apprehend all the officers, irrespective of where they may be, and with respect to such officers, their residence should be searched and in every instance all literature, membership cards, records and correspondence are to be taken.<sup>87</sup>

Many of the arrests were made without warrants, and of those detained many were held incommunicado and denied the right to counsel; many were not even radicals. Of the 800 incarcerated in Detroit, 300 were released after six days when it became clear that they had no connection whatsoever with radical causes.<sup>88</sup>

The Palmer raid of 2 January 1920 was by no means the only one directed against seizing and deporting non-citizen radicals. For example, on 7 November 1919, the government conducted raids in 12 cities against the pro-Communist Union of Russian Workers, arresting a total of 250 people and confiscating truckloads of literature. State and local officials followed the federal example.<sup>89</sup> From 1917 to 1921, a total of 900 leftists were deported.<sup>90</sup>

The most famous persecution under the federal sedition act was that of Eugene Debs, leader of the Socialist Party and five times its candidate for President (he received 6% of the national Presidential vote in 1912). On 16 June 1918 Debs made a public speech in Canton, Ohio which included the words 'The master class has always declared the war; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose — especially their lives. . . .' On 20 June, Debs was indicted and charged with ten separate violations of the sedition act for ten different statements in his speech, including this one. On 14 September 1918 he was sentenced to ten years in prison, of which he served three before receiving a Presidential pardon. While in prison Debs was the Presidential candidate of the Socialist Party in the 1920 elections, receiving over one million votes.

The Socialist Party was systematically repressed; its leading papers were banned from the mails; its elected representatives were denied seats in state



and federal legislatures. The entire national committee of the Socialist Party was indicted under the sedition act. Scores of leading socialists were imprisoned, including Charles Ruthenberg, Alfred Wagenknecht, Kate Richards O'Hare, J.O. Bentall, Scott Nearing and Rose Pastor Stokes.<sup>91</sup>

Socialists were denied their seats both in the US House of Representatives and in the New York State Assembly. Victor Berger, a leading socialist, was indicted under the sedition act in 1918 on the grounds of five anti-war editorials in *The Milwaukee Leader* of which he was editor. In November 1918, before his trial began, he was elected to Congress from Milwaukee. In December 1918 he was convicted and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. Berger was released on bail while waiting an appeal. (His conviction was overturned in January 1921.) In the spring of 1919 at the opening of the new Congress he was declared ineligible for seating and, after a committee report, his seat was declared vacant in November 1919. In a special election in December, Berger received 25,802 votes against the combined Democratic-Republican candidate's 19,800. But for the second time the House of Representatives refused to seat him, even though the war had been over for more than a year. Only six Representatives voted in favour of his seating.<sup>92</sup>

In January 1920, five elected members of the New York State Assembly were denied their seats on the grounds that they were members of an organization that had been convicted of a violation of the sedition act. The speaker of the Assembly addressed them arguing 'You are seeking seats in this body, you who have been elected on a platform that is absolutely inimical to the best interests of the State of New York and of the United States'.<sup>93</sup> The day after their expulsion *The New York Times* commented 'It was an American vote altogether, a patriotic and conservative vote. An immense majority of the American people will approve and sanction the Assembly's action.' In September, all five Socialists were re-elected, but were again denied their seats. In April, the Assembly went further, passing legislation which made the Socialist Party an illegal organization and barred its candidates from the ballot.<sup>94</sup>

Governmental complicity with organized violence and intimidation of radicals was also an important repressive force in this period. For example, in 1919, a citizen of Indiana, in a fit of rage, shot and killed a man who had yelled 'to hell with the United States'. The jury deliberated for two minutes before acquitting the killer. A man was mobbed in the Waldorf Astoria hotel for shouting 'to hell with the flag'.

Highly effective repression of the left was effected by organized groups, especially the American Legion and the Ku Klux Klan. The American Legion, founded in May 1919 (by December 1919 it had over one million members) was founded as a patriotic paramilitary organization of veterans committed to suppressing manifestations of 'un-Americanism'. The Legion's first commander ordered his men to be 'ready for action at any time . . . against the extremists who are seeking to overturn a government for which thousands of brave young Americans laid down their lives'. Legionnaires in some areas ran suspected radicals out of town, tarred and feathered aliens suspected of



left sentiments, and beat up Socialists. In Detroit, a local post prided itself on being called 'one thousand Bolshevik bouncers'. In Denver, legionnaires had a pact that they would: 'reply with their fists to any malcontent who talked of revolution or anarchy'. Anti-socialists throughout the country took up the slogan 'Leave the Reds to the Legion'.<sup>95</sup>

The Ku Klux Klan was revived in the Northern industrial states in areas with high concentrations of European immigrant workers, and were centres of working-class unionism and radical agitation. In 1924, its membership peaked at 4,500,000. The 'second klan' was committed to '100% Americanism'. It was against unions, which it considered a manifestation of communism; Roman Catholicism, the religion of the majority of the new immigrant workers; and Jews, whom it saw as behind the Bolshevik conspiracy. Temporarily, the Klan dominated politics in Indiana, Ohio and Oregon. Like the early Legion, the Klan was a paramilitary organization designed to terrorize, intimidate and suppress all manifestations of working-class radicalism. And like the Legion's early vigilante activities, the authorities – in many states Klan supporters – turned a blind eye to most Klan activity directed against the left.<sup>96</sup>

Systematic repression against the left had a devastating effect. Membership of the Communist Party(ies) decreased from about 70,000 at their founding to about 12,000 in 1922. Membership in the Socialist Party, which was decimated both by defections to the Communists and government repression, fell from 110,000 in 1919, to 12,000 in 1922. The IWW was virtually totally destroyed; its membership of more than 100,000 in 1917 was reduced to less than 10,000 by the mid 1920s – a mere shell of its former self. The union movement was likewise decimated with a sharp decline in membership and influence between 1919 and 1923.<sup>97</sup> Systematic government repression succeeded in isolating, greatly reducing the influence of, and demoralizing the American left, through the denial of basic civil liberties to its organizations, publications and leaders.

## **Depression, War and Civil Liberty: 1930–45**

Social instability, the consequent rise of militant movements challenging the system, war, and the consequent need to mobilize the people, of necessity, produce restrictions on civil liberties. Such was the case in the US during the depression of the 1930s, and World War II, exactly as has been the case in other countries and at other times.

After 1923 the repression of socialists and communists relaxed since: (1) conditions of economic prosperity returned and (2) the left movement had been fairly effectively destroyed through governmental repression. (The Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the IWW had all been reduced to ghosts of what they had been in the 1917–19 period.) The US was neither involved in, nor preparing itself for, any major overseas adventures, and clearly there was no significant threat, or even the potentiality of



a threat, from domestic working-class movements. But with the economic collapse of 1929 conditions for the growth of an opposition working-class movement once again returned. With the outbreak of another European war and US involvement increasingly likely, after 1937, the need to mobilize support for US overseas activities grew. Thus, although the restrictions on civil liberties in the 1930-47 period were relatively mild (except for the Japanese Americans), compared to what happened before and after, they were nevertheless considerable.

Throughout the 1930s there were examples of the continued application of state criminal syndicalism laws against members of the Communist Party, as well as prosecutions of communists under other legislation, both state and federal. For example, in Oregon in 1930 Ben Boloff, a construction labourer who had migrated from Russia in 1910 (and could speak no English) was arrested in Portland for vagrancy and then rearrested and charged with violating the criminal syndicalism act when a Communist Party card was found in his pocket. Boloff was convicted and sentenced to ten years in prison, a conviction which was upheld in the Oregon Supreme Court (he was, nevertheless, released). At his trial evidence was offered that showed he attended local Communist Party meetings where the Red Flag was displayed and literature was available which showed men bearing arms and engaging in violence.<sup>98</sup>

In 1934 another prosecution was brought under the criminal syndicalism act, against a leader of the Oregon Communist Party, DeJonge. DeJonge was charged with speaking at a public meeting in Portland, called to protest against the shooting of striking longshoremen and raids of workers' halls and homes during the West Coast Longshore strike of that year. Although the meeting was entirely peaceful and non-incendiary it was raided by police, with DeJonge being indicted on the grounds that he:

did then and there . . . conduct and assist in conducting an assemblage of persons, organization, society and group, to wit: the Communist Party, . . . which said assemblage of persons, organizations, society and group did then and there . . . teach and advocate the doctrine of criminal syndicalism and sabotage . . .'

Communist Party literature was offered as the sole proof of the advocacy of 'criminal syndicalism'. DeJonge was sentenced to seven years in prison, his conviction being sustained by the Oregon Supreme Court, but overturned by the US Supreme Court.<sup>99</sup>

In the late 1930s, New Jersey in general, and Patterson and Jersey City in particular, put considerable restrictions on the civil liberties of those supporting unions in local strikes. Patterson prohibited labour meetings, as well as meetings to protest against the prohibition of labour meetings. Roger Baldwin, the director of the American Civil Liberties Union, was arrested in Patterson as he started to read the Declaration of Independence in front of the city hall. Jersey City virtually prohibited any but approved speakers from



finding a platform of any kind in the city. Owners of public halls were deterred from renting them out; permits for the distribution of handbills were refused; prospective speakers who went to Jersey City were deported back to New York. Speakers permits were not only denied to such prominent socialists as Norman Thomas, but also to several US Congressmen, including Senator Borah, on the grounds that allowing them to speak would incite riots, disturbances or disorder.<sup>100</sup>

With the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, the American Communist Party took a neutralist position, identical to that taken by the Socialist and Communist Parties, and the IWW during World War I, identifying the war as one between capitalist countries, in which the workers had no interest. Consequently, in October and November 1939, Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, and Harry Gannes, foreign editor of *The Daily Worker* (along with another CP leader) were arrested under the passport laws. Browder was sentenced, in March 1941, to a four year sentence of which he served a year before being pardoned by Roosevelt (after the Soviet Union and the US had become allies). There were a number of other prosecutions of communists in the 1939-41 period reminiscent of the suppression of the anti-war left in the 1917-19 period, including revocations of citizenship of naturalized citizens, contempt citations by Congressional Committees for refusing to turn over membership lists, and convictions for collecting signatures on Party election petitions during the 1940 election. In Oklahoma, 18 Communist Party members were tried under the Oklahoma criminal syndicalism law and held under \$100,000 bail each. Two were sentenced to ten years each, but were shortly released.<sup>101</sup>

In June 1940, the US passed another federal sedition act, the Smith Act, directed against those who were opposing growing US involvement in the European war. This Act provided for heavy penalties for 'teaching and advocating the overthrow of the United States government by force and violence', prohibited the advocacy of insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty in the military forces of the US, and required the registration and finger-printing of all non-US citizens.<sup>102</sup> The Smith Act was first used to prosecute the Socialist Workers' Party (Trotskyist) because it refused to support the US involvement in the war, on the grounds that it was an inter-capitalist war. With the changed line of the US Communist Party after Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, the restrictions on the civil liberties of communists ceased, not to be resumed until after the war.

Inevitably, sympathizers with the national enemy during the war and, in the case of the Japanese, those defined by ethnicity as potential sympathizers of Germany and Japan, were systematically denied civil liberties in the 1938-45 period. It should be pointed out, however, that, apparently for racist reasons, restrictions on Japanese Americans were considerably greater than those on sympathizers with the Nazis.

In 1938, both the federal government and the City of New York began a campaign to destroy the German-American Bund, the leading pro-Nazi organization in the US. The City of New York employed tax laws effectively



against the Bund, claiming that the Nazis had violated the tax laws by not reporting income on the street sale of pamphlets and regalia. A detailed study of the Bund's financial records revealed irregularities that were used to convict Bund leaders of embezzlement. Bund funds were frozen during the investigation, making it impossible for it to pay its debts. Bund Fuhrer Kuhn went into hiding after the entry of the US into the war; he escaped to Mexico, where he was arrested and deported back to the US. He was convicted on several counts, including espionage, and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Between July 1942 and January 1944 a total of 42 individuals, 46 organizations, and 46 publications were indicted by federal Grand Juries for sedition under the Smith Act for being supportive of fascist causes. Nazi leader Kuhn, and 19 other prominent Bundists, were indicted under the naturalization acts for retaining allegiance to a foreign power at the time of their naturalization.<sup>103</sup> In general, however, Nazi leaders and sympathizers, while effectively repressed, fared reasonably well during the war years.

One of the most massive repressions of civil liberties in American history occurred during the war in respect of those of Japanese descent. All Japanese living West of the Mississippi, regardless of the degree of Japanese blood, whether or not they were citizens, or how many years they, or their ancestors, had been in the US, were forcibly removed to isolated relocation camps. The 85% of Japanese Americans who lived West of the Mississippi, a total of 112,000 persons, were given between 48 hours and two weeks to prepare for evacuation to camps in the barren areas of the West. They were allowed to take with them only what they could carry, thus being forced to dispose of their houses, cars, appliances and other possessions – typically to unscrupulous buyers who offered extremely low prices for Japanese possessions, knowing that they had to sell immediately. The Japanese Americans lost hundreds of millions of dollars in this period.

The West Coast Japanese were put under the authority of the US army. Relocation (concentration) camps were opened in the most desolate areas of California, Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Arkansas. Until the relocation camps were ready, the Japanese were put into 15 temporary assembly centres, usually race tracks or fairgrounds. The camps were enclosed by barbed wire, with military sentinels stationed in towers to prevent escape. Families were crowded into single rooms. Employment was offered at the rate of \$16.00 a month (which often, although promised, failed to materialize). Strikes against labour conditions in the camp were systematically repressed by the army, which confined strike leaders, isolating them from the rest of the camp population, for the duration of the war. The celebration of Japanese culture and the use of the Japanese language were strongly discouraged, and Japanese schools were forbidden.<sup>104</sup>

## **Repression of the American Communist Party and Civil Liberties: 1947-56**

The Smith Act, which had been passed in 1940, was used against the



Communist Party for the first time in July 1948, when indictments were brought against 12 of the 13 members of the national board of the Party, including William Z. Foster (Chairman), Eugene Denis (General Secretary), Robert Thompson (Labour Secretary), Benjamin Davis (New York City Councilman), Henry Winston, John Gates (editor of *The Daily Worker*), Gilbert Green and Gus Hall. The 12 were charged as follows:

... the defendants herein, unlawfully, wilfully, and knowingly, did conspire with each other, and with divers other persons . . . to organize as the Communist Party of the United States of America, a society, group, and assembly of persons who teach and advocate the overthrow and destruction of the Government of the United States by force and violence, and knowingly and wilfully to advocate and teach the duty and necessity of overthrowing and destroying the Government of the United States by force and violence . . .

It should be noted that the indictment charged neither that the defendants actually attempted to overthrow the government, nor that they had actually taught the techniques of such an overthrow, merely that they taught the theory that a violent overthrow was justified.<sup>105</sup> The government's case in this and other Smith Act trials, was largely based on reading and discussing extracts from *The Communist Manifesto*, *The State and Revolution*, *Problems of Leninism* and other Marxist classics endorsed by the CPUSA in order to prove its advocacy of violent revolution. All 12 defendants were convicted, eleven being given the maximum five years sentence plus a \$5,000 fine. In July 1951, eight of the twelve began serving their sentences, their appeals to the Supreme Court having been denied on the grounds that the Soviet and Communist threat was of such a magnitude that there was a probable (though not immediate) danger of revolution in view of inflammable world conditions. Four of those convicted, Thompson, Hall, Winston and Green, went 'underground' rather than surrender themselves for imprisonment. Hall, however, was soon captured and given an additional three years in gaol, the others were never caught, but turned themselves in voluntarily four years later.<sup>106</sup> The eight spent the full five years in prison, Hall spent seven years.

The conviction of the Party leadership was followed by the arrest and trial of local communist leaders around the country. In California, in July 1951, 12 state leaders including Oleta O'Connor Yates (State Secretary of the Party), Al Richmond (editor of *The People's World*) and Dorothy Healy were arrested. All 12 were convicted and given the maximum five years in prison plus a \$10,000 fine.<sup>107</sup> Six leaders of the Michigan Party were tried in October 1953, including Saul Wellman, the Michigan Party leader and co-ordinator for the automobile industry. The six were fined \$10,000 each and given sentences of from four to five years. In Philadelphia, nine leading communists from Oregon and Washington went on trial. This case was unique in that it was the first Smith Act trial in which any of the accused was



acquitted (Kitty Larson, who could prove he left the Party in 1946). The others were sentenced to the standard five years.<sup>109</sup> Similar events occurred throughout the US – in Utah, Colorado, Connecticut, Ohio, Hawaii, Missouri, Cleveland, Baltimore, New York City and Pittsburgh.

Leaders of the Communist Party were also charged under the Smith Act with Communist Party membership, a crime which carried a maximum sentence of ten years. Eight membership prosecutions were brought. The first was against Claude Lightfoot, Secretary of the Illinois CP. His sentence of five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine was upheld by the US Supreme Court in January 1956. Junius Scales, Secretary of the North and South Carolina CP in 1955, was sentenced to six years in prison, the heaviest single sentence in any Smith Act case (except for Gus Hali).<sup>110</sup>

The Smith Act trials all followed much the same pattern, with the prosecution's cases being built around the combined testimony of ex-party members (much the same handful of witnesses appeared in trial after trial) and the introduction of Party-endorsed literature, both largely focusing on what the Communist Party in fact taught and advocated, and relatively little on what the specific defendants actually did. The prosecution would inevitably quote such phrases from Lenin as, 'The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine', and Stalin '... the law of violent proletarian revolution, the law of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine as a preliminary condition for such a revolution, is an inevitable law of the revolutionary movement of the imperialist countries'.<sup>111</sup> Witnesses brought by the prosecution testified to the content of books read, discussed and taught by the defendants.<sup>112</sup>

Specific charges alleged such offences under the Smith Act as having attended and participated in various CP conventions, having attended classes on the 'History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union', having written and caused to be published an article entitled 'Concentration and Trade Union Work', 'did attend and participate', 'did cause to be used ... a safe-deposit box', 'to conceal his true identity ... did use the false name ...', 'did attend a rally ... a conference ... an affair ... a forum', 'did prepare a press release', '... circulated copies of a letter', etc. During some of the trials, library hand trucks were wheeled into the courtroom to facilitate citations by both sides from a wide range of Marxist literature.<sup>113</sup>

When Communist leaders took the stand in their own defence, in order to explain communist teachings, it was standard practice to ask them to talk about the activities of other communists – which they always refused to do. This refusal was frequently interpreted as contempt of court and punished by 30 day sentences for each violation. In the California trial, after the head of the California Party, Mrs Yates, had given eloquent and lengthy testimony about the beliefs of the Communist Party, she was cited for eleven separate contempt charges for refusing to talk about other individuals in the Party, and sentenced to a year in gaol. This technique became a major inhibition to taking the stand in one's own defence and consequently leaving a bad impression on juries. It also served as an immediate sanction



against communist leaders which short-circuited the judicial machinery.

Legal defence became a problem. Left lawyers were sometimes cited for contempt and sentenced. In order to present a more respectable defence the Party at one point attempted to secure 'respectable' lawyers who were not sympathetic to communism, but found this virtually impossible. The 17 defendants in the Flynn case, in New York in 1952, submitted an affidavit showing that they had approached 28 law firms asking for an interview, had received no reply from 12, and had been refused by 16. Non-communist lawyers did not want to jeopardize their careers by defending Communists.<sup>114</sup> By the end of 1956, 108 Communist Party leaders had been convicted under the Smith Act. Of the remaining 37 indictments originally brought by Federal grand juries, there had been five severances, ten acquittals and 22 cases still pending in the courts. It should be noted, however, that as of 1 June 1958, only 28 of the leaders actually spent time in prison *after* their conviction.<sup>115</sup>

Between 1949 and 1952 most of the states passed legislation making it a criminal offence to *advocate* violent governmental change, or to join an organization so advocating. By 1953, 39 states had such legislation. In Maryland, leaders of organizations which advocated violent governmental change became subject to a maximum of 20 years in prison, while mere membership was punishable by five years in gaol. Maryland also made it a crime to advocate the setting up of a US government under foreign domination, even if violent methods were not advocated.<sup>116</sup>

Connecticut made it a crime to print 'scurrilous or abusive matter, concerning the form of government in the United States, its military forces, flag or uniforms . . .', or to advocate before ten or more persons any measure 'intended to injuriously affect the government of the United States or the State of Connecticut'. In Michigan in 1950, writing or speaking subversive words could incur a life sentence; Tennessee introduced the death penalty for unlawful advocacy; Indiana made 'unlawful advocacy' punishable by three years in prison. In Massachusetts, to be a member of the Party or to knowingly allow a meeting place to be used by the CP could incur a three year sentence. In Texas, membership of the Communist Party became punishable by 20 years in prison. Towns and cities also passed anti-Communist legislation. Los Angeles County required registration of Communist Party members, and tried Henry Steinberg, a local leader, for refusing to register. Similar registration laws were enacted in a number of local areas. The most severe sentence for refusing to register as a subversive was given in Alabama, when, in August 1954, Matthew Know, a janitor, was sentenced to two years in prison on the basis of communist literature in his room (he did not admit to being a Communist Party member).<sup>117</sup>

Communists and other sympathetic leftists were prosecuted and gaoled for contempt of Congress. Congressional committees, especially the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HCUA), would subpoena prominent leftists in cities all over the US and require them to answer questions under pain of a prison sentence for contempt of the Committee. From January 1945 to April 1971 there were 174 contempt citations issued by the HCUA



and its successor, the House Internal Security Committee. Between 1950 and 1952 Congress cited 117 people for contempt (compared with a total of only 113 contempt citations in the entire period 1857-1949). Congress endorsed all the 226 contempt citations voted by its committees in the period 1945-57. Contempt citations stemmed from such things as refusing to reveal names of contributors or organizational records, or to name individuals involved in Communist Party activities. It should be noted, however, that the majority of contempt citations were eventually overturned in the courts.<sup>118</sup>

Communists were also gaoled for contempt for invoking the Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate oneself before a grand jury. By July 1949, 16 California communists were thus convicted, with many being gaoled. In September 1950, Eugene Brunner was sentenced to six months in prison in California for invoking the Fifth Amendment in regard to past Party membership. Supreme Court rulings in 1950 and 1952, however, established the right to invoke the Fifth Amendment, thus invalidating these convictions.<sup>119</sup>

The Communist Party was banned as an electoral organization. It was prohibited from entering candidates in elections. New York State banned the Communist Party from the ballot in 1938 (Communists thereafter ran as candidates of the American Labor Party). California followed suit in 1940 with legislation which prohibited from the ballot any party which 'uses . . . as a part of its party designation the word "communist" or any derivative'; and any party which is 'directly or indirectly affiliated, by any means whatsoever', with the Communist Party, the Third International, or any other foreign organization, government, etc., or which advocated the overthrow of the government by violence.<sup>120</sup> Indiana, in 1945, passed legislation requiring that each candidate's party must insert a plank in its programme proclaiming that it did not advocate any subversive doctrines. Local electoral boards were given the authority to 'determine the character and nature of the political doctrines' of the candidates. Every candidate for office in Pennsylvania had to file an affidavit that he or she was not 'a subversive person'. By the end of 1952 approximately one-half of the states had barred as candidates individuals and organizations advocating the violent overthrow of the government, sedition, or a foreign dominated government in the US. The state of Washington required that all elected officials swear under oath that they were not members of any organization listed by the US Attorney General as subversive.<sup>121</sup> In 1954 the federal government effectively banned the Communist Party from participation in federal elections. The Communist Control Act of 1954 ('An Act to Outlaw the Communist Party') stripped the Communist Party of 'all rights, privileges, and immunities attendant upon legal bodies'.<sup>122</sup>

The right of assembly was severely abridged for the Communist Party and its sympathizers. As already seen, the state of Massachusetts made it a felony to knowingly allow the use of premises for Communist Party meetings. Beginning in 1947, public meeting rooms and halls were more and more



frequently denied to the Communist Party, Henry Wallace supporters and other progressives. In August 1950, Madison Square Garden refused to hire its hall to the Council on African Affairs, an organization included in the Attorney General's List. San Francisco denied the use of its City Auditorium for public meetings organized by the Committee to Save the Rosenbergs. The New York Board of Education barred left-wing organizations from school buildings. The town supervisors of Hempstead and Oyster Bay New York in 1956 refused to let W.E.B. DuBois speak in Levittown Hall, because of his 'reputed Communist front affiliations'.

The mayor of New York ruled that organizations listed on the Attorney General's List were barred from soliciting funds in the streets. In 1953, the annual May Day parade on Eighth Avenue in New York was banned because, as the Police Commissioner put it, the marchers were 'puppets of the Soviet government'. In August 1950, a proposed Communist Party-sponsored protest demonstration against US involvement in the Korean war was banned. When the rally was held without police authorization, 1,000 police broke it up arresting 14 people and beating many more.<sup>123</sup>

The Communist press was restricted both through the arrest and imprisonment of the editors of the major Communist papers, and also through the seizure of *The Daily Worker* in 1956. In March 1956 the federal Bureau of Internal Revenue raided and seized the offices of *The Daily Worker*, on the grounds that the Party owed back taxes.<sup>124</sup>

There was considerable repression in the cultural field, especially in the film industry, television and radio. Ten leading progressive motion picture writers and directors were indicted in 1947 and sentenced to gaol for refusing to tell the House Committee on Un-American Activities their political beliefs and affiliations.<sup>125</sup> They and about 250 others were 'blacklisted', including some of the most talented directors, writers and actors in Hollywood.<sup>126</sup> Other leading playwrights and authors were similarly treated. In 1956, Arthur Miller, whose works had long been blacklisted by the film, television and radio industry, was subpoenaed by the HCUA and convicted of contempt for refusing to talk about the activities of other people. Leftists were banned from appearances on radio and television. Leading artists, such as Paul Robeson, were denied access to both the mass media and public concert halls.<sup>127</sup>

In 1947, President Truman issued an executive order imposing a loyalty oath on federal employees as a condition of employment. The Attorney General compiled a list of 'subversive organizations' and any members of such organizations were excluded from federal jobs. In 1953 President Eisenhower, through another executive order, changed the standard of eligibility for federal employment from loyalty oaths to security clearance through investigation. During the Truman administration 1,210 people were dismissed and about 6,000 others resigned as a result of the loyalty programme (this compares with only about 100 dismissals during the World War II years). From 1953 to 1956 there were approximately a further 1,500 dismissals and 6,000 more resignations as a result of security investigations. Thus, during the



1947-56 period, there were about 2,700 civilian dismissals and 12,000 resignations as a result of the loyalty and security programmes.<sup>128</sup>

States and local government also barred 'subversives' from employment. By the end of 1950, 32 states had implemented bans against Communists and 'other subversives' in public employment. The most common, actual grounds for dismissal were Fifth Amendment discharges – refusal to answer questions posed by legislative committees.<sup>129</sup> In October 1950, California legally transformed all public employees into 'civil defence workers' and gave them 30 days to swear that they had not, within the last five years, advocated the violent overthrow of the government nor belonged to any organization that did so. Beginning in 1953, California state employees were also automatically dismissed for refusal to answer any questions put to them by governmental agencies and committees.<sup>130</sup> The County of Los Angeles required its employees to swear that they did not belong to any of 142 'subversive' organizations. As a result of the county, and a similar city ordinance, 45 employees were immediately discharged.<sup>131</sup> New York City's loyalty programme resulted in the dismissal of over 250 city employees between 1943 and 1956. Excluding teachers, it has been estimated that a total of about 500 state, municipal and local government employees were dismissed for political reasons from 1948 to 1956.<sup>132</sup>

The federal government imposed security clearances as a condition of work in many occupations in industry and transport. Clearance became a condition of work for maritime workers. By the end of 1956, 3,783 workers (around 2,500 merchant seamen and 1,300 waterfront men) were denied clearance, and hence their jobs. The security programme decimated leftist strength in maritime unions.<sup>133</sup> Under the federal Industrial Personnel Security Program, approximately four million private employees were screened for access to confidential, secret or top secret information from 1947 to 1956. Besides the maritime workers another 1,529 were denied clearance, and the majority of them also their jobs. A woman worker in an electrical plant was fired because her sister had signed a communist-sponsored petition and she had refused to stop seeing her. A navy yard employee, temporarily living with his grandmother who was a friend of Mother Ella Bloor, a veteran Communist, was fired.<sup>134</sup>

HCUA systematically acted to ensure that radicals lost their jobs. Frequently witnesses were fired as soon as they were subpoenaed. It was a standard practice to sack anyone who refused to testify before a Congressional committee by taking the Fifth Amendment. In June 1954, Roy Cohn, Senator McCarthy's chief aide, stated:

The way to get results, sir, is to hold our hearings, get these people in public session, have them claim the Fifth Amendment, have the witnesses name them as Communists, have them fired from the defense plants . . . . The employers have adopted an arrangement that they will not act against these people unless and until we hold these hearings . . .<sup>135</sup>



Many leading corporations were subject to political pressure to discharge any employee who invoked the Fifth Amendment. Some employers even fired those who had merely been mentioned unfavourably before Congressional committees. Bethlehem Steel fired a half dozen workers in 1954. In 1957, 15 of 22 witnesses who invoked the Fifth Amendment in Baltimore before the HCUA lost their jobs, including seven at Bethlehem Steel (the United Steel Workers refused to support them). A number of workers at the Buick plant in Flint, Michigan were fired after the HCUA exposed them as 'college trained militants'. General Electric announced that it would discharge all employees who refused to testify. A number of workers lost their jobs in Seattle after the HCUA arrived in town, including a 19-year-old dishwasher whose husband and father had been named before HCUA. A member of the Molder's Union who was 'identified' by HCUA was dismissed after a woman phoned his company every day for several weeks demanding his dismissal.<sup>136</sup> A captain in the Seattle fire department lost his job just a few days before he was due to retire, thus losing his pension rights.<sup>137</sup>

Employers often fired workers on their own initiative, without waiting for prompting from the HCUA or government pressure. A worker was fired by Firestone for expressing provocative comparisons of the US and the USSR during company time; a worker was discharged for signing the Stockholm Peace petition. In 1946 Lockheed fired 18 workers on the grounds that it lacked sufficient proof of their loyalty. In 1947 Curtiss-Wright fired a worker for distributing communist pamphlets. A witness for the defence in the first Communist Smith Act trial lost her job as soon as she testified.<sup>138</sup>

In 1955, the Supreme Court of California ruled that membership in the Communist Party was in and of itself sufficient grounds for dismissal, as well as for the termination of any collective bargaining contract. The California Court's ruling was upheld by the US Supreme Court in 1956.<sup>139</sup> Those dismissed found it very difficult to find alternative employment in any but low paying jobs. For example, the vice-president of an electronics firm who was denied security clearance had his salary reduced from \$18,000 to \$4,000 a year. There were suicides, and emigration to Mexico, Canada and Europe in search of work.

In 1947, the Taft Hartly Act effectively prohibited communists from holding office in trade unions. All union officials had to swear that they were not members of, or affiliated to, the Communist Party. Unions that refused to file such oaths for their officers were excluded from the government guarantees of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), a considerable detriment. In 1954, the Communist Control Act declared that any union which was found to be 'Communist infiltrated' was denied the services of the NLRE, and the right to sue in federal courts to enforce collective bargaining agreements, as well as the right to complain about unfair labour practices.

In 1949, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) expelled nine unions, representing about 900,000 workers, including the influential West Coast Longshoremen (ILWU) and the United Electrical Workers, for being



communist infiltrated. The CIO then proceeded to set up competing unions and encourage its existing unions to raid those unions that were expelled. As a result of the combined assault of the federal government and the CIO, the left-wing unions, except for the ILWU, were decimated.

Communists and other leftists were banned from office by most unions and many were expelled altogether. By 1954 about 60% of all unions had amended their Constitutions to bar communists from office. Forty percent also banned communists from membership, a serious liability in plants with union shops. Many unions also refused to defend those fired for being 'subversives' or for refusing to testify before Congressional committees.<sup>140</sup>

Not only were communists and their sympathizers denied employment, they were also denied the benefits of government social security programmes. In 1955, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare ruled that CP members were ineligible for retirement benefits. Not only did it stop social security payments to known communists, but in some cases it demanded the return of previous payments. William Z. Foster and other leading communists were cut off the security rolls. In June 1956, however, this policy was terminated. In 1954, the Veterans Administration (VA) ruled that no further disability payments would be given to those convicted under the Smith Act. Party leaders Robert Thompson and Saul Wellman were thus cut off from the benefits they had been receiving as a result of their World War II injuries. The VA further demanded that Wellman pay back the \$10,000 he had already received; not until 1958 was this policy overturned. Unemployment benefits were often denied to people who were fired for having taken the Fifth Amendment. In 1952, the US Congress passed legislation stipulating that no federally financed housing could be occupied by members of organizations listed as subversive by the Attorney General. Local housing authorities were instructed to demand that all tenants sign a certificate of non-membership of any subversive organization.<sup>141</sup>

Numerous universities and school districts dismissed professors and teachers for leftist organization membership and sympathies. In 1948, three tenured members of the University of Washington faculty: Herbert Phillips (philosophy), Joseph Butterworth (English) and Ralph Bundlach (psychology) were fired without severance pay, on the grounds that being members of the Communist Party implied 'neglect of duty'. Three other faculty members were put on probation conditional upon them formally renouncing all connection or sympathy with the Communist Party. None of the three dismissed, tenured faculty members were ever able to find another university position.<sup>142</sup> Faculty members were also dismissed for communist ties at other schools, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard and New York University (NYU). Many tenured and untenured faculty members were dismissed simply for taking the Fifth Amendment before a Congressional Committee (e.g. for refusing to reveal names and activities of others). Such occurred at the University of Kansas City (associate-professor H.B. Davis); Ohio State (professor Byron Darling); the University of Bermond (Dr Alex Novikoff); Temple University (professor Barrows



Dunham), and the University of Michigan (three faculty members). In 1949, Oregon State fired two faculty members, one tenured. One of those, associate-professor of chemistry Ralph Spitzer, was fired because he wrote an article in *The Chemical and Engineering News* that supported the theories of Lysenko, this being decisive evidence, according to the OSU President, that 'he goes right down the party line without any noticeable deviation'.<sup>143</sup>

The University of Wyoming inspected the textbooks used by the faculty for 'un-American material'. Courses on the Soviet Union were likely to be closely examined by administrations and modified or cancelled as a result. Faculty members grew fearful of recommending radical readings or appearing to be sympathetic to radical ideas in their lectures. The entire US teaching profession was intimidated. The Dean of the Columbia School of Journalism said, 'Today the vast majority of teachers . . . have learned that promotion and security depend upon conformity to the prevailing . . . concept of devotion to the public welfare'.<sup>144</sup>

At the University of California in 1949, a loyalty oath was required of all faculty members, who were required to swear that they were 'not a member of the Communist Party or any other organization which advocates the overthrow of the Government'. Six faculty members were immediately dismissed for refusal to sign, or to co-operate with a special committee on tenure. Another 39 who refused to sign, but who told the committee that they were not communists, were also fired.<sup>145</sup> In June 1952, 28 California public and private schools including Stanford and the University of California system decided to collaborate with the state's Un-American Activities Committee and employ on each campus a representative of the Committee (all of whom were former employees of the FBI or military intelligence) whose job it would be to investigate the loyalty of both current and prospective faculty. Within a year this system had resulted in over 100 dismissals and resignations, and in the prevention of approximately 200 appointments. Professors were also dismissed for refusal to sign disclaimers about Communist Party membership at San Francisco State (seven were fired) and San Diego State College.<sup>146</sup> In New York State alone, 58 college and university teachers lost their jobs.<sup>147</sup>

In June 1949, the HCUA demanded from 81 colleges and high schools lists of the books used in social science, political science, history, government, economics, literature and geography. The Defense Department demanded the right to examine the curricula of approximately 200 colleges and universities engaged in classified work under military contract.<sup>148</sup>

Colleges and universities systematically banned Marx and other controversial speakers. In 1955, the University of Washington prohibited J. Robert Oppenheimer from speaking. Leftists who did speak were intimidated by Congressional Committees. Paul Sweezy was subpoenaed by the HCUA to talk about his speech at the University of New Hampshire. His refusal to answer some questions resulted in a contempt citation.<sup>149</sup>

The dismissal and intimidation of public school teachers became common in this period. Most states imposed disclaimer oaths as a condition of



employment. Kansas had a typical oath requirement:

I \_\_\_\_, swear that I do not advocate, nor am I a member of any political party or organization that advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States or of the State by force or violence. . . .<sup>150</sup>

Thirteen states required disclaimers of membership in any organization on the Attorney General's List. Six specifically barred membership in the Communist Party.<sup>151</sup>

By the summer of 1953 it was estimated that more than 100 school teachers had been suspended or fired for non-cooperation with Congressional committees. In February 1954, 32 teachers were suspended in Philadelphia, the majority of whom were soon fired; in New York City about 320 school teachers were fired. A total of at least 600 dismissals or forced resignations of school teachers for political reasons can be documented during this period.<sup>152</sup>

Communists, sympathizers and other leftists (including those hostile to the Communist Party) were systematically prohibited from travelling overseas (even to Canada) after 1947. Members of the Communist Party were unable to obtain passports after 1947, except for accredited members of the press. Periodically, *Daily Worker* correspondents were denied the right to travel abroad; the passport of *The Daily Worker's* European editor, Joseph Starobin, was revoked in 1953. The Internal Security Act of 1950 made it a crime for members of organizations designated as 'Communist-action groups' even to apply for a passport. The US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, stated, in May 1952, that it was government policy to withhold passports from all those whom there was 'reason to believe' were in the CP or whose 'conduct abroad is likely to be contrary to the best interests of the United States' and from anyone who might reasonably be believed to be 'going abroad to engage in activities which will advance the Communist movement'.<sup>153</sup> Passports were revoked or denied to Dr Walter Bergman, a prominent member of the Norman Thomas Socialist Party; Howard Fast (the novelist); William O. Douglas (the Supreme Court Justice, for travel to China); Edward G. Robinson, Arthur Miller, Carl Foreman, Rockwell Kent and Max Schachtman (leader of the militantly anti-Communist Independent Socialist League); Paul Robeson, the prominent Black entertainer, was not only denied a passport, but was prevented from entering Canada. For the benefit of thousands of Canadians, Robeson gave annual concerts at the Peace Arch Park on the Canadian border with the aid of loudspeakers, from time to time from 1952 to 1955.<sup>154</sup>

Foreign communists, and others whose potential visits to the US were considered to be not in the best interest of the United States, were prohibited entry into the country. The Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950 barred from entry into the US all those who advocated 'the economic, international and governmental doctrines of world communism or . . . of any other form of totalitarianism'. Past or present membership in the Communist



Party was deemed sufficient to prohibit entry. Moreover, for purposes of this Act past membership in Nazi or fascist parties were *not* considered to be included under the definition of 'totalitarian'. Prominent leftists were systematically denied entry into the US, even to attend conferences. Those excluded included leading British Communists: Harry Pollitt and R. Palme Dutt, professor J.D. Bernal, Pablo Picasso, the Dean of Canterbury, Salvador Ocampo (the secretary of the Latin-American Federation of Labor), Oscar Niemeyer (the leading Brazilian architect). Ernst Mandel (a leading European Trotskyist), and Andre Gunder Frank. The state department's policy of banning entry to those considered hostile to US interests was not waived until 1978, in the middle of Carter's Human Rights campaign (because of its obvious hypocrisy);<sup>155</sup> Reagan reviewed the practice.

Deportation of non-citizens for affiliation or sympathy with the Communist Party was another technique used by the government to repress oppositional sentiment. In 1940, the Immigration Act of 1918 was amended to allow deportation on the basis both of present and *past* membership in any organization advocating violent overthrow of the government. In 1950 the Internal Security Act permitted the deportation of anyone who, at the time of their entry, had been an anarchist, communist or a member of any group required to register as a subversive organization. From 1947 to 1953 approximately 300 'political' non-citizens were arrested and held for deportation. In California alone 190 'subversive aliens' were arrested for deportation between 1948 and 1956. Between 1945 and 1954, 163 people were actually deported for political reasons. A principal deterrent to the deportation of non-citizens accused of subversive associations was that all the socialist countries refused to accept as deportees persons who had been born in those countries, thus requiring the US to allow them to stay in the US indefinitely. Non-citizen communists who had been born in Western Europe, Latin America or Canada were more likely to be deported than were those born in Eastern Europe, as their countries of origin refused to accept them. The majority of those subject to deportation orders were thoroughly integrated into American society, many having left Europe as small children, and even being unable to speak the language of the countries to which they were deported. A 1956 study showed that 60% of the deportees had lived in America for more than 40 years, and 81% for more than 30 years, while more than half had children who were American citizens. Twenty percent could neither read nor write the language of their country of birth.<sup>156</sup>

Communists and sympathizers were targetted for forcible removal to 'relocation' camps maintained under the authority of the McCarren Act, which permitted the government to detain persons considered dangerous during a national crisis. In 1951 the FBI's 'Security Index' of persons considered potentially dangerous, and thus detainable during a crisis, contained 13,901 names. By 1954 the Index consisted of approximately 26,000 names. In addition to the Security Index of Communist Party militants, the FBI, from 1948 to 1960, also maintained a 'Reserve Index' which consisted of people considered sympathetic to the Communist Party.



This list also included members of other non-Communist led organizations.<sup>157</sup>

## **The 1960s and Political Repression**

The last half of the 1960s saw a significant increase in domestic opposition both among Blacks and among white students in the US. The American state's response to this revitalized opposition movement was repression – as it had been so many times before. Repression in this period took the form of arrests of radicals – often on fabricated charges – systematic harassment of leftist and Black nationalist organizations, systematic disruption of radical organizations, and even assassinations and the driving of Black leaders into exile.

In the post-1965 period, there was a tremendous increase in police surveillance of radicals. By the beginning of 1972 more than 500 municipalities were reported to have political police, so called 'Red Squads'. It was estimated that in the US as a whole almost 5,000 agents were assigned to such work. In 1970 the Los Angeles police department's political division had 167 agents; in 1972, New York City's 361. In Chicago, in 1969, it was reported that over 1,000 agents were working on political matters (for local, state and federal agencies). The Superintendent of the Illinois State police was quoted at the time as saying, 'I've never seen anything like the intensity of the current investigations in all my years in law enforcement'.<sup>158</sup> New York City's political police held files on 1.2 million persons (reduced, in 1973, to 240,000).<sup>159</sup>

During the late 1960s and early 1970s 'active surveillance' was maintained on more than 250,000 Americans. A 1976 report of the Senate Intelligence Committee concluded that such 'active surveillance' had infringed on a broad scale the freedom and privacy of those under surveillance.<sup>160</sup> Although the FBI's Security Index was formally abolished by an act of Congress in 1971, the FBI continued to maintain the list of 'subversives', merely renaming the old list 'the Administrative Index'. The criteria for inclusion in the renamed index became an individual being 'in a position to influence others to engage in acts inimical to the national defence, or furnish financial aid or other assistance to revolutionary elements because of their sympathy, associations, or ideology'. The new index had 15,259 names. These individuals were marked either for immediate arrest in a national emergency or for 'priority investigation' after those with arrest priority had been confined.<sup>161</sup>

In 1970, the FBI instructed its local branches to report on 'every Black Student Union and similar group, regardless of their past or present involvement in disorders' together with 'all individuals' belonging to 'militant New Left campus organizations'. In the same year the FBI initiated a 'Key Black Extremist' programme, designed to locate and monitor 'Black extremists who are either key leaders or activists and are particularly extreme, agitative, anti-government and vocal in their calls for terrorism and violence'. Such



individuals were to be put in the top priority for arrest category in the FBI's Security Index/Administrative Index. In 1971, the FBI initiated an investigation of the New University Conference (an organization of college teachers and graduate students) and the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.<sup>162</sup>

In 1968, the FBI's Security Index of those marked for detention in case of a national emergency was expanded to include the categories of 'Black Nationalists' and 'Anarchists' (Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and other new leftists). A 1968 FBI memo to field offices instructed field agents to investigate, with a view to inclusion on the Security Index, individuals in the New Left movement whose 'potential dangerousness' to 'internal security' was 'clearly demonstrated by their statements, conduct and actions' even if 'no membership in a basic revolutionary organization could be established'. The memo specified that individuals with 'anarchistic tendencies' should be included in the Security Index on the basis of statements and actions that 'establish his rejection of law and order and reveal him to be a potential threat to the security of the United States'.<sup>163</sup>

The FBI's anti-radical activities went far beyond mere surveillance and the maintenance of lists of those to be arrested in a national emergency. The FBI was actively engaged in disrupting left organizations and discrediting left leaders. One FBI tactic used against both Marxist and Black Nationalist organizations was to plant information that a certain leader was an FBI agent, in order to discredit him or her. In 1964 a New York Communist Party official was expelled from the Party, accused of being an agent, because of such a planted story.<sup>164</sup> The FBI report on the furore around the expulsion stated that it 'crippled the activities of the New York State Communist organization, and the turmoil within the party continues to this date'. Identical things happened to Black organizations in the late 1960s. For example, a Black organization received a letter purporting to be from a 'soul brother' in a junior position in the FBI which pointed to one of their leaders as an FBI agent. In 1969 an FBI informant originated a story that a local draft counsellor was an FBI agent. This led to the ostracization of the counsellor.<sup>165</sup>

In May 1968 the FBI launched a systematic campaign to, in their words, 'expose, disrupt, and otherwise neutralize the activities of the various New Left organizations, their leadership and adherents'. It became FBI policy to plant FBI provocateurs in SDS chapters to instigate violence, to disrupt New Left organizations by discrediting leaders, causing splits and aggravating sectarianism among organizations, and to engineer the firing of radical university faculty members.

FBI policy was to provoke 'personal conflicts or animosities' among New Left leaders by creating or supporting factions, generating stories discrediting leaders and disrupting their personal life, as well as aggravating hostilities among different left organizations. FBI agents were frequently instructed to initiate violent acts including attacking the police, bombing, and disrupting meetings and demonstrations. In Seattle, FBI infiltrators engaged in a series



of acts of bombing and burning university and civic buildings.<sup>166</sup> The FBI also sent letters (anonymous or otherwise) to sponsors of anti-war coalition demonstrations, pointing out that members of 'subversive' or 'communist' organizations were involved or 'behind' such activities. Such letters were sent to owners of meeting places in order that the use of such facilities would be denied to anti-war meetings, or to liberal participants in such activities (to cause them to drop out by 'Red Baiting') and to the press (to give them material to run exposés about 'Communist infiltration' of the anti-war movement).<sup>167</sup>

The tactic of turning competing groups against each other (i.e. originating or exaggerating sectarianism) was also an FBI ploy, exercised both with the Marxist left and within the Black movement. In 1966 the FBI's 'operation hoodwink' was initiated to set the Communist Party and organized crime against each other by sending forged threatening letters to both. Later, in California, a similar technique was used to provoke violence between the Black Panthers and non-Marxist Black nationalists.<sup>168</sup> In 1968 the FBI stirred up factionalism in the Los Angeles SDS by having an informant accuse two leaders of embezzling funds. According to the FBI report on this incident these accusations culminated in 'fist fights and acts of name calling at several of the recent SDS meetings'.<sup>169</sup>

Documents obtained from the FBI through court action by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) revealed infiltration of the strong Bloomington, Indiana SWP youth group chapter in order to 'bring about a split in philosophy'. These documents also revealed that, by means of provocative anonymous letters, the FBI intervened in Atlanta in January 1970 in order to reopen a split between the SWP and its allies and the Revolutionary Youth Movement.<sup>170</sup> Such actions reflect a central tactic of the FBI campaign of systematic disruption: sowing sectarianism in order to weaken and divide the left. This tactic worked extremely well, and although the evidence is not decisive, it undoubtedly played an important role in the destruction of the SDS and its disintegration into many small, ineffective and mutually antagonistic factions in the 1969-73 period.

The FBI was especially concerned about the 'threat' from Black organizations and directed much of its energy into both disrupting and discrediting them *and* sowing dissension between Black and predominantly white organizations – as well as animosities among Blacks and white members of the same leftist organizations. In March 1968 the FBI put into operation its 'Cointelpro' strategy against what J. Edgar Hoover labelled, 'Black hate groups'. Hoover's March 1968 memo, which outlined the objectives of this programme, included the following points:

- (1) prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups. In unity there is strength. . . . An effective coalition of black nationalist groups might be the first step toward a real 'Mau Mau' in America, the beginning of a true black revolution.
- (2) Prevent the rise of a 'messiah' who could unify, and electrify the



militant black nationalist movement.

(3) Prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community. [The 'responsible Black community', the white community and 'Negro radicals'.]

(4) . . . prevent the long range growth of militant black nationalist organizations, especially among youth.<sup>171</sup>

In addition to the FBI efforts to sow discord between Black Marxist and non-Marxist nationalists, the FBI emphasized preventing unity between Black and white radicals. It was deeply concerned, in 1964 and 1965, when the followers of Malcolm X were becoming close to the Socialist Workers' Party.<sup>172</sup> Documents obtained through court action by the SWP revealed that the FBI made concerted efforts to stir up racial antagonisms within that organization by anonymous letters (often racist letters sent to Blacks allegedly from white comrades, and arguments about 'racial imbalance' in favour of whites in leading bodies). One such letter sent to Black SWP leader Paul Boutelle stated:

Some of us within the Party are fed up with the subversive effect you are having on the Party, but since a few see your presence as an asset (because of your color only) not much can be said openly. . . . Why don't you and the rest of your fellow Party monkeys hook up with the Panthers where you'd feel at home?<sup>173</sup>

Another anonymous FBI letter, attempting to disrupt the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam by stirring up racial antagonisms and race-baiting argued:

Over the past several years the Trotskyites have literally taken control of the body proper and have repeatedly resisted efforts to recruit black brothers into NMC leadership. . . . I have been sickened – on more than one occasion – by the promises made to the Black United Front, promises not kept, promises made with the mouth and not the heart. In the main, NMC leadership has been no better than the racist politicians and phony liberals who give lip service to the black community and turn their backs on any positive action. The NMC leadership has demonstrated an appalling lack of sensitivity towards the largest minority in the country . . . the situation must be rectified immediately.

This letter ended 'Just for the record – I am not Black'.<sup>174</sup>

This two-pronged effort by the FBI to drive Blacks out of multinational Marxist organizations by the use of racism, and to disrupt and discredit predominantly white organizations through false claims of white racism (especially by not having a high proportion of Black leaders) also appears to have



been very successful. It was developed to undermine the Communist Party in the late 1940s and early 1950s and, according to leading participants, probably played an important role in the Party's notoriously disruptive 'anti-white-chauvinism campaign' in which much of the CP's energy was directed into divisive attacks on itself.<sup>175</sup> The continuing use of both of these devices to divide and demoralize predominantly white organizations, and to hinder the recruitment of minorities by multi-national organizations throughout the 1970s, strongly suggests a continued FBI employment of this tactic throughout this decade. The extremely effective use of both 'racism' and 'race-baiting', 'guilt tripping', because of their appeal to racially sensitive minorities and guilt-ridden young radicals, certainly did not discourage the FBI and other police organizations from promoting or adding to such disruptive activities.

The FBI also attempted to disrupt the personal lives of leading leftists by writing letters to spouses of activists, claiming that their partners were engaged in extra-marital affairs. Martin Luther King was the subject of such harassment by the FBI. Other 'Cointelpro' operations included attempting to get radical teachers fired from their jobs by writing anonymous letters to employers, mailing abusive anonymous letters to radicals, circulating false information about events, cancelling reservations for meeting places made by leftist groups, distributing phony right-wing campus newspapers attacking local leftists, actual physical assaults on dissidents, burning or disabling of cars owned by radicals, stealing mail, kidnapping of militants, and widespread use of illegal 'bugs'.<sup>176</sup>

The FBI was instrumental in the dismissal of assistant professor Morris Starsky from the University of Arizona in the late 1960s, because:

It is apparent that New Left organizations and activities in the Phoenix metropolitan area have received their inspiration and leadership almost exclusively from the members of the faculty in the Department of Philosophy at Arizona State University (ASU) chiefly Assistant Professor Morris Starsky.

FBI tactics used against Starsky included sending anonymous and slanderous letters to those members of the Faculty Committee who heard the charges against him.<sup>177</sup>

From May 1968 through to the spring of 1971 the New Left was the target of about 290 separate disruptive actions by the FBI. More than half of the 73 individuals who were on the FBI's 'Key Activist' list of New Leftists between 1968 and 1971 were subject to 'some type of prosecutive action' by local or federal officials. Approximately 40% of 'Cointelpro' activity directed against the New Left was devoted to keeping left leaders from speaking, teaching, writing or publishing.<sup>178</sup>

State repression of the New Left and the Black nationalist movement went considerably beyond disruptive tactics and spreading discord. After the first of the major 1960s Black riots, Bill Epton (a Black organizer for the



Progressive Labor Party) was arrested and convicted under the New York State 'criminal anarchy' statute (the first time such a charge had been brought in this state in 40 years).<sup>179</sup> There were a number of major trials for 'conspiracy' to commit felonies against leaders or participants in various political actions. The most famous of these was the so-called 'Chicago Eight' trial against a number of national anti-war leaders who were involved in organizing demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in 1968. They were charged with conspiracy to cross inter-state lines with the intent to incite a riot.<sup>180</sup> Other major conspiracy trials took place in Seattle. Eight leaders of the Seattle Liberation Front (SLF) were charged with conspiracy to damage federal property, and rioting. These charges were based on a February 1970 SLF demonstration that ended with paint spraying and window breaking at the Seattle federal courthouse. Although the demonstration was organized only ten days in advance, the indictment charged four of the defendants with crossing state-lines the previous December with intent to incite a riot.<sup>181</sup>

In September 1969 a leader of a Detroit demonstration was arrested under an old Red Flag law. Many political radicals were arrested and convicted and some sentenced to severe prison terms for possession of marijuana. John Sinclair (the leader of the White Panther Party), was sentenced to nine and a half years for smoking a marijuana cigarette with two undercover agents. Lee Johnson (a Black anti-war organizer) was sentenced to 30 years for giving marijuana to an undercover agent. After lengthy appeals both of these convictions were eventually overturned.<sup>182</sup> There were over 100 documented cases of people being prosecuted under 'flag protection' statutes for such actions as displaying a flag with a peace symbol replacing the stars.<sup>183</sup> Anti-war activists who ran coffee houses near military bases were systematically harassed. Three operators of such a coffee house in Columbia South Carolina were sentenced to six years in prison (eventually reduced to a year of probation and a suspended sentence) and their coffee house padlocked, on a charge of 'keeping and maintaining a public nuisance'. Organizers of another coffee house, near Fort Sill, Oklahoma, were sentenced to six months by a federal judge for trespassing on government property, because, in the words of the federal judge, 'acts of lowering the morale of the troops at Fort Sill are a serious matter'.<sup>184</sup>

A number of student activists were killed by the police and national guard. The most well known example was the shooting to death of four Kent State University students in May 1970. Most of the dead and wounded students were shot in the back or side after a student threw a stone at the soldiers. While the local grand jury absolved the National Guard, they indicted 25 students, faculty members and ex-students on felony charges stemming from the incident.<sup>185</sup> A less publicized but equally significant event occurred at the same time at Black Jackson State College in Mississippi. In July 1970 a student activist was killed by police in Madison, Wisconsin, as were two students in Lawrence, Kansas. Two students were also killed by the police at Southern University in Louisiana. The local grand



jury investigation concluded that there was 'no justification for the shootings'.<sup>186</sup>

The Grand Jury system during 1970-73 was employed as an instrument for intimidating and harassing leftists. Co-ordinated by the Internal Security Division of the Justice Department, Grand Juries went on what came to be called 'fishing expeditions'. In the 1970-73 period over 1,000 people were subpoenaed before over 100 Grand Juries to testify about their own and other people's radical activities. Those subpoenaed were required to testify in secret, without legal counsel, under threat of gaol for contempt. In 1970 a new federal law was passed that denied the right of those subpoenaed to refuse to testify on the grounds of the Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate oneself. The new concept of 'use immunity' meant that the Fifth Amendment precluded only the use of one's own testimony against oneself, but that *all* questions had to be answered, even if statements were self incriminating.<sup>187</sup>

As in all repressive periods, leftists were dismissed from teaching positions. At San Francisco State three professors were dismissed and two others denied tenure. Staughton Lynd, a leading radical historian, was refused a position at Northern Illinois University, as well as at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, by the Chancellor of the State College system (who overruled the Presidents of the Colleges) because he had travelled to North Vietnam. Angela Davis was dismissed from the University of California because she was a member of the Communist Party. A political science professor at the University of Vermont (Michael Parenti), an economics professor at San Diego State (Peter Bohmer) and a philosophy professor at Arizona State (Morris Starsky) were all fired for their anti-war activities. Other dismissals occurred at the University of Connecticut, the City University of New York, Oklahoma State University and the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.<sup>188</sup>

Again, as in other periods, the state censored literature and other media it considered subversive of the existing order. In May 1967, the Postmaster General banned a journal published in China from the US mails on the grounds that it encouraged Black soldiers to 'sabotage operations' in Vietnam. Films produced in socialist countries (namely Cuba and Vietnam) were prohibited from entry into the country, and were seized by the US government at scheduled showings when copies were obtained in spite of the federal ban.<sup>189</sup>

The most systematic and effective repressive US government campaign was that against the Black Panther Party. Unlike the white student New Left, the Panthers, an explicitly revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organization, were, in the late 1960s, in the process of acquiring a mass base among working- and lower-class groups within the Black community. The FBI reported that in the spring of 1970, 25% of Blacks and 43% of Blacks under 21, had 'great respect' for the Black Panther Party. The FBI, in a special top secret report to the President, in June of 1970, described the Party as 'the most active and dangerous black extremist group in the United States'.<sup>190</sup>



A systematic national campaign organized by the US federal government in co-ordination with state and local police and intelligence units in order to destroy the party, included sowing dissidence, mass arrests, political trials for conspiracy, and assassinations of Panther leaders. Such techniques succeeded in suppressing the Panthers everywhere except in its original home — the Oakland area.

In 1968 and 1969 Black Panther offices were raided 18 times by the police, three Panthers were deported from the US, and 21 cases of police harassment of individuals were documented. During this period 768 members of the Black Panthers were arrested on a total of 1,003 charges, including 178 charges of possession of weapons, 96 of disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace, 92 of attempted murder, or conspiracy to murder, 38 of conspiracy to bomb, 16 of rioting or conspiring to riot, 36 of illegally selling newspapers, 11 of unlawful assembly and one charge of setting up an unlawful table. A high proportion of the charges were eventually dropped, which suggests that many arrests were for purposes of harassment. In those cases where data exists, there was a conviction rate of 88%.<sup>191</sup>

Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton was charged with the murder of a policeman and spent 22 months in gaol before being released. The other most prominent Panther, Bobby Seale, was tried as one of the 'Chicago Eight', for conspiracy to cross state-lines with the intent to riot (although he had participated in the events only at the 1968 Democratic convention as a substitute speaker at a rally). Seale was also arrested and gaoled for alleged involvement in the murder of a New Haven Black Panther. Twenty-one leading New York City Panthers were arrested in 1969 for 'conspiracy to bomb department stores and murder policemen' and were held in gaol for over two years before being acquitted. The climax of the nationally co-ordinated police suppression of the Panthers occurred in December 1969 when Chicago police raided the apartment of Fred Hampton, head of the Panthers' Chicago section, and killed him in his bed. A Grand Jury investigation of this incident found that 83 to 99 shots were fired, all but one of which were from police weapons.<sup>192</sup>

In summary, the US state in the late 1960s responded as it had in any comparable period when there was a growing threat to the dominant system of property and privilege. Repressive measures grew in harshness parallel with the growth in numbers and the radicalism of the left. Repressive measures were focused on what was seen as the most important danger threatening the Black movement and the possibility of Black Nationalist-white Marxist unity. Repressive measures were cancelled and even publicly repudiated in the mid-1970s after both the Black nationalist and New Left movements had been decimated.

Between 1974 and 1980, there was no challenge of any consequence to the dominant system of property and privilege and no effective movement opposed to US foreign policy, and thus it was one of the most tolerant and least politically repressive periods in US history. When there is no need for repression, there is no repression. In the early 1980s, at the beginning of the



Reagan administration and with the imminent probability of a revival of US imperial intervention overseas, cutbacks in social programmes at home, and the consequent probability of a rebirth of the anti-war, student, and national minority movements, it can be expected that the state will once again resort to the appropriate measures to ensure 'law and order' (privilege and property).

## **United States Support of Repressive Regimes Overseas in the 1960s and 1970s**

In the 1965-80 period there was a systematic denial of basic civil liberties in most US supported client states of the Far East and Latin America. Suppression in these countries was qualitatively greater than anything experienced in the Soviet Union or in other socialist countries (Kampuchea aside) in the same period. The most brutal suppression of civil liberties at this time was probably in Uruguay, Guatemala and Indonesia, where political opponents were systematically killed on a massive scale, without benefit of even a formal trial.

Amnesty International, in September 1979, announced that since 1966 more than 20,000 Guatemalans had been killed for political reasons by the military government and its supporting 'death squads' (mostly off duty policemen), 2,000 between mid-1978 and the end of 1979. There have been no convictions for any of these 20,000 murders. It reported that all those arrested for political reasons have been killed, only one of whom was allowed to make contact with friends, relatives or lawyers. Amnesty International does not adopt prisoners of conscience in Guatemala because prisoners of conscience are 'murdered within a short time of their detention'.<sup>193</sup>

About one in 500 persons in Uruguay in the late 1970s was in gaol or concentration camps for political reasons. Political incarceration at an equivalent rate for the Soviet Union at the same time would mean over 500,000 prisoners, compared to the actual total of between 100 and 500, i.e. the rate of incarceration for political reasons in Uruguay was more than 1,000 times higher than in the Soviet Union (see Chapter 8). It has been estimated that between 1973 and 1978 a total of 40,000 people were gaoled for political reasons, about 1.4% of the population. The comparable number of political prisoners in the Soviet Union would be approximately 3.5 million, i.e. the overall rate of political incarceration in the 1973-78 period was about 10,000 times higher in Uruguay than in the Soviet Union.<sup>194</sup>

Since the military coup in Argentina in March 1976 through to the end of 1978, 15,000 political opponents 'went missing' without a trace and have been officially declared dead by the government. A year after the coup there were between 5,000 and 10,000 political prisoners, as well as tens of thousands forced into exile.<sup>195</sup>

Similar data can be reported for other Latin American countries, especially Chile, Brazil, El Salvador and Paraguay, where political opponents



systematically 'disappear', many murdered by 'death squads', (consisting mainly of off-duty police and military personnel) unofficially sanctioned and protected by the state. Amnesty International's *Annual Report* for 1975-76 notes that more than 80% of the urgent appeals and actions for victims of torture are from Latin America.<sup>196</sup>

American client states in the Far East have also been especially brutal in their suppression of civil liberties. Estimates of the number of leftists killed after the 1965 military coup in Indonesia run from between 500,000 and more than a million (disproportionately people of Chinese descent). Official government figures report another 750,000 people arrested for political reasons. Amnesty International estimated that in 1977 there were still between 55,000 and 100,000 political prisoners. Indonesia's heavy-handed approach to civil liberties was again demonstrated after the December 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Estimates of the number of East Timoreans killed by the Indonesian Army run to one-sixth of the population. A report of the Australian Parliament found that the Indonesian Army engaged in 'indiscriminate killing on a scale unprecedented in post-World War II history'.<sup>197</sup> South Korea and the Philippines are also notorious for suppression of civil liberties. By the end of 1977, more than 60,000 persons had been arrested by the Marcos regime. In 1981, 15,000 were imprisoned without trial in South Korea for their writings, speeches, union activity, or for demonstrating.<sup>198</sup>

Suppression of basic civil liberties is also virtually universal in the various right-wing dictatorships and racist regimes of Southern Africa and the Middle East. Political prisoners in Iran between 1973 and 1976 are estimated at 25,000 to 100,000, and 300 officially acknowledged executions.<sup>199</sup> The Republic of South Africa systematically detains opponents without trial and restricts their freedom of movement, expression and association, as well as tries and convicts opponents of apartheid. Israel engages in similar practices against Palestinians. According to Amnesty International Israel employs 'the use of administrative measures to physically restrict individuals without due process of law, including detaining them without trial'.<sup>200</sup>

The US state systematically supports the repressive regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America and their use of the repression of civil liberties as a mechanism to secure their rule, and thus consolidate existing property and power arrangements. Table 8.1 shows the relation between increased political repression and denial of civil liberties, and both increased benefits to US transnational corporations and increased economic and military support from the US.

Over 200,000 Latin American military personnel were trained in the US between 1949 and 1980. The US not only trains foreign military personnel in about 150 different bases and schools but also sends military advisory missions to a great many less developed countries. Most of the arrests, confinements, executions and torture of political prisoners in right-wing regimes are carried out by the military police, who are largely trained and often advised by the US, or the Brazilian, military, itself trained by the US.



Table 8.1

US Aid, Investment Climate and Human Rights in Ten Countries

<i>Country:</i>	<i>Strategic Political Dates<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Positive (+) or Negative (-) Effects on Democracy</i>	<i>(-) means an increased use of torture or death squads</i>	<i>(-) means an increase in No. of political prisoners</i>	<i>Improvement in Investment Climate: tax laws eased (+)</i>	<i>Improvement in Investment Climate: labour repressed (+)</i>	<i>Total Economic and Military Aid (US and Multinational) (% change)</i>
Brazil	1964	-	-	-	+	+	+ 112
Chile	1973	-	-	NA	+	+	+ 770
Dominican Republic	1965	-	-	NA	+	+	+ 133
Guatemala	1954	-	-	NA	+	+	+ 5,300
Indonesia	1965	-	-	-	+	NA	+ 62
Iran	1953	-	-	-	+	+	+ 900
Philippines	1972	-	-	-	+	+	+ 161
South Korea	1972	-	-	-	+	+	+ 9
Uruguay	1973	-	-	-	+	+	+ 21

Sources:

1. Information on torture and political prisoners mostly from the Amnesty International Report on Torture, 1975 and The Amnesty International Report, 1975-76, 1976. Supplemented with data from newspaper articles, journals, and books on the specific countries. Data on investment climate largely from articles, journals, and books on the specific countries.

2. Data on aid taken from US Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations, AID, 1972 and 1976 editions, for years 1962-1975. Data previous to 1962 taken from Historical Statistics of the United States, Bicentennial Edition, Department of Commerce, 1975.

Adapted from Chomsky and Herman, 1979, p. 43.

SAVAK, The Shah of Iran's secret police, was set up by the CIA in 1957 and its leading officers were trained by the US. Many SAVAK agents received instruction under US police training programmes financed by the Agency for International Development (AID). The US military and intelligence agencies provide training in torture techniques to the police and military as well as



providing torture technology.

The rationale for US support for repression of civil liberties in the right-wing, less developed countries is that repression is essential in order to fulfil the overriding demand for the 'security' necessary to obtain stability for economic development and the consequent prosperity that will render conservative parliamentary capitalist forms viable. Both the US and the various military regimes justify their use of wholesale confinement, torture and execution of opponents as necessary to eliminate the 'terrorist' i.e. revolutionary forces threatening their societies. It is of interest to point out that the tens of thousands of leftists killed in Latin America, from 1973 to 1976, as part of the campaign to stamp out 'terrorism' contrasts with the worldwide total of 292 deaths reported by the State Department's Office for Combating Terrorism in the same period as allegedly caused by 'terrorists', i.e. leftist revolutionaries.<sup>201</sup> In spite of the very large disparity between deaths caused by leftist 'terrorists' and by military regimes, it should nevertheless be pointed out that the massive repression of political opponents has been far from irrational or gratuitous. To preserve and consolidate the system of property which both encompasses base disparities of wealth and income, *and* freedom for US and other transnational corporations to invest, communist and other anti-capitalist movements have had to be destroyed or prevented from achieving enough strength to make a revolution.

## Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the level of civil liberties, tolerance and repression over the course of US history, from its revolution of 1776 to the 1970s has been a product of the threat to the dominant institutions of that society and the need to mobilize for foreign or domestic war. The next two chapters on the Soviet Union over the comparable period in its history from its revolution of 1917 to the 1980s, attempt to demonstrate that most of the variation over time in the level of tolerance and repression in that society, as well as the comparative differences between it and the US, are due primarily to the variations and differences in the degree of internal threat to its prevailing institutions and the need to mobilize for external and internal war. In other words, it will be shown that there is no qualitative difference in this respect between the two countries.

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198. Amnesty International, 1978, pp. 170-2, 183-5; Chomsky and Herman, 1979, p. 234; *New York Times*, 20 September 1981, p. 5.
199. Chomsky and Herman, 1979, p. 13.



200. *New York Times*, 11 December 1981, p. 2.
201. Chomsky and Herman, 1979, pp. 4-5, 46-9, 94.



## 7. Toleration and Repression in the USSR: 1918-54

This chapter and the following one examine the level of tolerance/repression of ideas contrary to the values of the Soviet system, as well as the variations in the level of due process guarantees for political opponents, over the course of Soviet history. This chapter focuses on the period of Civil War (1918-20), the New Economic Policy (1922-27), the Cultural Revolution and Collectivization (1928-31), the so-called 'Great Purge' (1936-38), and the post-War (1948-55) periods. Chapter 8 explores the contemporary (1965-82) period. Chapter 9 interprets the results of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in an attempt to develop a *general theory* of the level of tolerance of public advocacy that can account for variations in 'political repression' in any state society — capitalist or socialist.

This attempt to develop an analytical framework within which to explain the somewhat radical fluctuations in tolerance and repression over the course of Soviet history should, in no sense, be taken as a justification for the unjust and erroneous action taken against either many innocent, middle and rich peasants in the 1930-31 period of rapid collectivization, or the many innocent leaders and officials of the CPSU and other Soviet institutions who were 'purged' and, in all too many cases, executed, in the 1936-38 period. Those who want both to understand such events, so that they may not happen again, to understand the real liberating potential of socialism and capitalism are perhaps compelled more than others to seek an understanding of the causes of such phenomena. It is insufficient, and scientifically inaccurate, to lightly dismiss actions against innocent people as a result of the personality of a few 'bad' leaders or of merely 'mistaken' policies. If the left is: (1) successfully to avoid such serious errors in the future, and (2) to give a scientific account of these past events to those who today are justly concerned about human rights in socialist societies — and who, because of such legitimate concerns, keep their distance from the left — then it is essential that a careful and non-emotionally charged analysis be developed. The last chapters of this book are an attempt at such an analysis.

It should be stressed that official contemporary CPSU accounts of the developments of the collectivization and 'Great Purge' periods are not used as evidence here, and that heavy reliance has been accorded to Western, carefully documented sources, as well as the reports of leading opponents of



the CPSU leadership during this period, for example, Deutscher, Medvedev, Brzezinski. Unquestionably, (1) many innocent peasants were wrongfully considered to be class enemies and treated accordingly during the height of the campaign for collectivization; and (2) such Soviet leaders as Bukharin, Kamenev, Trotsky, Tukhachevsky, and Zinoviev were neither guilty of any collaboration with Western intelligence agencies, nor guilty of the charges of conspiring to overthrow Soviet Power — as was falsely claimed in the three Moscow trials of 1936-38.

This chapter attempts to show that the considerable variations in the level of tolerance/repression during the 1918-54 period of Soviet history were essentially a result of the considerable variations in the level of domestic conflict and threat of external invasion. In general, the greater the level of domestic crisis and the perceived probability of external invasions, then the lower the level of tolerance of public advocacy of anti-Bolshevik or anti-leadership ideas. The more secure the international situation, and the higher the level of domestic legitimacy, the greater the tolerance of alternative perspectives — as well as the more secure are due process guarantees, such as that of a fair trial. The variations in tolerance/repression over Soviet history are accounted for without reference to personalities, megalomania, or inherent tendencies to bureaucratization, that is, repression is analysed in materialist terms.

### **Civil War, Invasion, and Relaxation (1918-27)**

In any revolutionary civil war, both sides act against opponents behind their lines, just as they take direct action opposing organized armed groups. Such was the case in the Russian Revolution and Civil War, as it has been in the American, English, French, Cuban, Vietnamese, Angolan, or any other revolutions.

Out of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Soviets which organized the seizure of power in October 1917 grew a special security branch, mandated to seek out counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs — the Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-revolution and Sabotage (the CHEKA). Organized under the leadership of the Polish revolutionary Dzerzhinski, the early CHEKA was described by John Reed as 'self-restrained and gentle',<sup>1</sup> an evaluation with which most authorities, including Roy Medvedev and Isaac Deutscher, concur.<sup>2</sup> During the first six months of CHEKA activity (throughout the spring of 1918) only 22 people were executed for sabotage or counter-revolutionary activities. During the second half of 1918, however, as the Civil War intensified, 'a wave of conspiracies and terrorist acts swept over the young Soviet Republic and the Party was obliged to respond with the Red Terror'.<sup>3</sup>

The bulk of CHEKA activities took place near the military fronts and were directed against those who were playing an active role in aiding the white armies. According to Roy Medvedev, CHEKA activities:



... were thought of not as juridical or investigative agencies. They were military-administrative *punitive* agencies. Just as a soldier at the front kills his opponent simply because he sees him with a weapon in his hand, so the Cheka's mission was to seek out and destroy counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs, the internal enemy. A civil war is a special kind of conflict; the front passes through every city, every village, every house.<sup>4</sup>

During the last six months of 1918, approximately 6,000 people were shot for counter-revolutionary activities and sabotage, and during the next two and a half years of civil war another 7,000; many more people were confined. Given the ferocity of the war, as well as the historical standards of 'white terror' (including that engaged in by the Russian Whites at the time) or other revolutionaries' terrors (for example, that of the French Revolution) this 'Red Terror' was mild. According to Bolsheviks at the time, 'if the CHEKA can be accused of anything, it is not excessive zeal in shooting, but insufficient application of the supreme penalty'.<sup>5</sup> According to Medvedev the Red Terror of 1918-21 was a 'question of saving the Soviet state from certain downfall'.<sup>6</sup> Deutscher, comparing the Red Terror of 1918-21 with that of the French Jacobins in 1793 and 1794 emphasized the Revolution's gentle treatment of its enemies:

The Bolshevik regime was nearing the close of its second decade without showing signs of Jacobin-like insanity. To be sure there was no lack of terror in the years of the civil war, from 1918 to 1921. But that terror was still a measure of war against an armed and militant counter-revolution. Its methods and objectives were defined by the nature of that war. Unlike the Jacobins, the Bolsheviks did not execute their Girondists. The most eminent spokesmen of Menshevism, Martov, Dan, Abramovich, were either allowed to leave or were exiled from Russia after their party had been banned. A handful of those who stayed behind were imprisoned, but most Mensheviks, reconciling themselves to defeat, loyally served in the Soviet administration and even on the staffs of the leading Bolsheviks.<sup>7</sup>

During these early years, not only did other revolutionaries (Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, etc.) receive liberal treatment, but workers and peasants were treated with considerably greater leniency than those of other class backgrounds – especially landlords and capitalists.<sup>8</sup>

Once the tide turned in the Civil War, the extraordinary measures that had been necessary to secure victory in the 1918-19 period were greatly limited. After the Red Army defeated Denikin in January 1920 Lenin instructed Dzerzhinski to cease using the death penalty and other extraordinary measures. In his report to the All-Union Central Executive Committee on 2 February, 1920, Lenin argued:



We were forced to use terror because of the terror practised by the Entente, when strong world powers threw their hordes against us, not avoiding any type of combat. We would not have lasted two days had we not answered these attempts of officers and White Guardists in a merciless fashion; this meant the use of terror, but this was forced upon us by the terrorist methods of the Entente.

But as soon as we attained a decisive victory, even before the end of the war, immediately after taking Rostov, we gave up the use of the death penalty and thus proved that we intend to execute our own programme in the manner that we promised. We say that the application of violence flows out of the decision to smother the exploiters, the big landowners and the capitalists; as soon as this was accomplished we gave up the use of all extraordinary methods. We have proved this in practice.<sup>9</sup>

The regime of political prisoners during the Civil War, throughout the 1920s and in many respects until 1937, was both lenient and oriented to rehabilitation. To quote Roy Medvedev:

They received extra food, were exempt from forced labour, and were not subject to humiliating inspections. In political gaols self-government was allowed: the politicals elected elders, who dealt with the prison administration. They kept their clothes, books, writing materials and pocket knives; they could subscribe to newspapers and magazines.

Torture was prohibited until 1937. A CHEKA special order issued in December 1929 reads:

Information received by the Cheka establishes that members of various anti-Soviet parties arrested in political cases are being kept in very bad conditions. . . . The Cheka points out that the above listed categories of people must not be regarded as undergoing punishment, but as temporarily isolated from society in the interests of the Revolution. The conditions of their detention must not have a punitive character.<sup>10</sup>

The year between the time when it was clear that the Bolsheviks had won the civil war and the Tenth Party Congress was a period of intense public debate among different factions of the Communist Party about how the institutions of socialism ought to be shaped, and what policies of socialist transition ought to be implemented. Perhaps the most controversial debate occurred around the role of unions. Different factions and individuals put forth a wide range of proposals. For example, Trotsky argued there was no need for them; the so-called 'Workers Opposition' that they should directly run the enterprises; Lenin for a middle position.

Just six days before the Tenth Party Congress was to convene, the Kronstadt mutiny broke out, convulsing both the country and the Party. In



addition to developing and adopting the New Economic Policy — involving major economic concessions to the peasants — as a way of dealing with the crisis the Party also tightened its internal discipline. It was considered that the extent of public disagreement during the previous year, especially around the question of the role of trade unions (which centred on the recurrent debate among socialists regarding whether workers' councils or a central plan should be primary) reduced both the Party's public and internal effectiveness, and incited the demands of the Kronstadt sailors (who adopted a programme of workers' self-management very similar to that of the 'Workers Opposition' within the Party). In response, the Party Congress passed a resolution which, for the first time, banned organized factions in the Party. The resolution called for the dissolution of all Party groups with separate platforms and provided for expulsion from the party for continued factionalism. The resolution criticized Party groups 'with separate platforms and with the determination to a certain extent to become self-contained and to create their own group discipline' as being incompatible with the Party's social role. It went on to insist that: 'Everyone who criticizes in public must keep in mind the situation of the Party in the midst of the enemies by which it is surrounded. . . .' <sup>11</sup>

At the end of the Civil War, and once the New Economic Policy had defused the discontent manifested in the Kronstadt rising, there was a regularization of the judicial and police system. In 1922 a new system of civil and criminal courts was created to replace the revolutionary tribunals, while socialist law codes were promulgated for the first time. The CHEKA was abolished in February 1922. The Bolsheviks, however, realizing that there was a continuing need to investigate, and for limited actions against, both domestic opponents and foreign agents, created the GPU (the State Political Directorate of the Commissariat of the Interior) to carry on such work. The criminal code adopted in 1922, sensitive to the needs of both justice and self-preservation, read:

Propaganda, or agitation, or participation in an organization, or co-operation with organizations, have the effect (i.e. the propaganda or agitation) of helping in the slightest way that part of the international bourgeoisie . . . which is endeavouring to overthrow [the Soviet system] by force, whether by intervention, or blockade, or by espionage, or by financing of the press, or by other means — is punishable by death or imprisonment. <sup>12</sup>

The courts were also given power to punish any 'socially dangerous act', which was defined as any act that menaced the stability of the dictatorship of the proletariat, was an obstacle to the development of socialism, or disorganized social relations. <sup>13</sup> Thus, like any other state, the consolidated socialist regime organized its repressive apparatus to defend itself both against external enemies, and domestic opponents who actively opposed the system of property relations it was designed to protect. As a state it could not act



otherwise and survive.

During the first four years of Soviet power, non-Bolshevik working-class parties continued to operate legally in the Soviet Union. The Left Social Revolutionaries were co-partners with the Bolsheviks on the ruling Council of People's Commissars (occupying seven of the 18 seats) until July 1918. When, in July 1918, the Left Social Revolutionaries declared themselves in opposition to the Bolshevik leadership of the Civil War, and actually organized an armed insurrection, they were temporarily banned from participation in the Soviets. Although they had not supported the seizure of power, the Right Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were active in the Soviets until they were banned from participation, also in June 1918, they were temporarily excluded owing to their failure to support the Reds in the Civil War. But even after their expulsion the three parties continued to operate as legal and active political organizations. The decrees banning Menshevik and Social Revolutionary participation in the Soviets were rescinded in the winter of 1918-19 after these organizations declared themselves opposed to foreign intervention and to collaboration with the bourgeoisie (i.e. had declared their support of the Reds in the Civil War). The Right Social Revolutionaries were allowed to resume publication of their newspaper in 1919, and both groups legally held congresses during 1919. In 1920 the Mensheviks were still electing substantial numbers of representatives to the Soviets in a number of cities, including Moscow. In 1920, the Left Social Revolutionaries decided to merge into the Bolshevik Party — as did the left wing of the Jewish Bund in 1921.<sup>14</sup>

The Right Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were banned only in 1921 during the deep crisis in Soviet society caused by the strains of war. Communism and massive peasant — and to a lesser degree worker — discontent was brought to a head by the naval mutiny at Kronstadt. In March 1921 the Kronstadt sailors' mutiny issued a national call to overthrow the Bolshevik leadership of the Revolution. The mutiny's main demands included: the release of all political prisoners; the abolition of the special leading position of the Communist Party; the rights of the peasants to do with their land whatever they wanted; the immediate re-election of the Soviets by 'free and secret ballot'; and the elimination of all restrictions on freedom of speech and the press.<sup>15</sup>

In the summer of 1922 a number of leaders of the Right Social Revolutionaries were put on trial for involvement in counter-revolutionary activities. The Right Social Revolutionaries had led a number of uprisings of peasants in 1920 and, in the same year, formed an alliance with the Left Cadets (a middle-class based liberal party) against the Bolsheviks; additionally, at its 1920 Congress there were appeals for the use of violence against Bolsheviks.

Roy Medvedev, who argues that the contemporary Soviet Union should establish a multiparty system, nevertheless argues:

Although the Bolsheviks' treatment of the other democratic parties was not beyond reproach, it should be pointed out that the Communist Party's monopoly of political activity was a product of history; in a



certain period it was an important condition for the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>16</sup>

The reason the Bolsheviks gave for the creation of a single party state in 1921 is that a single cadre party is necessary in order to unify and mobilize the people for the difficult tasks of socialist construction and national defence. It is argued that if separate parties exist, even separate socialist parties based in the working class, artificial divisions and antagonisms will result, largely generated by the needs of organizations and candidates to find and magnify issues with which to provoke and aggravate discontent in order to attempt to win. A single cadre party, it is argued, can, after hearing all sides, aggregate popular sentiments, articulate them through the language of Marxist theory, and test the validity of their explicit formulation, bringing them back to the masses in the form of meaningful slogans, programmes and policies — the process referred to by Mao Tse-Tung as 'the mass line' — in such a manner as to avoid creating dissension and exacerbating discontent, and instead, generating the enthusiasm and solidarity essential for the effective realization of the socialist project.

It is further argued that it is possible for a single party to be authentically democratic provided it maintains firm roots among the most respected members of the working class and peasantry, who transmit the sentiments and interests of average working people, through the Party's apparatus, to its leading bodies and hence to all social institutions. This conception of democracy reverts to the original usage of the term as rule by the people, rejecting the contemporary notion, predominant in Western parliamentary democracies, that popular rule is possible only by the more or less open competition of different political parties in periodic elections. The Marxist analysis of such multiparty parliamentary forms is that they can be easily manipulated, through a wide range of instrumental and structural mechanisms, to serve the propertied class and their economic system, while single party working-class based systems are much more responsive to the needs of working-class people, that is, are authentically democratic in the original sense of the term.

Thus, in 1921, the Soviets institutionalized both a one-party system and a monolithic Communist Party without organized internal factions; both institutions remain in the Soviet Union until the present day. The model of the Communist Party established in 1921 has become the model for communist parties almost everywhere, while the pre-1921 multifactioned form of Bolshevik organization, which actually led the Bolshevik seizure of state power in 1917, is largely ignored by those interested in 'building' a party of the Leninist type.\*

\* The Soviet model of a single party society, however, has been adopted by only minority of Socialist societies (e.g. Yugoslavia, Cuba). Many others (e.g. Poland, The German Democratic Republic, China, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia) have



The bans on other political parties remained but, during the period of the New Economic Policy (1921-28) there was a relatively high level of tolerance for diverse perspectives in Soviet society. Restrictions on the press were relaxed and scores of private printing houses and non-party journals were founded.

In the 1924-25 period nomination rules were relaxed in order to make it easy for candidates not approved by the Communist Party to win election to the local Soviets. In new electoral instructions issued in early 1925, Party organizations were told to cease to 'impose their list at election meetings' and no longer to insist that voters 'be excluded merely because they have been critical of local Soviet authorities'.<sup>17</sup> As a result the majority of those elected to the village Soviets in the rural areas of the Ukraine and Russian Republic were non-Party. After the 1927 elections about 90% of delegates and 75% of local Soviet chairmen in both Republics were non-Party.<sup>18</sup>

The ban on organized factions in the Party was not rescinded, but a vital internal party life, as well as toleration of widely diverse viewpoints within the Party, continued throughout the period of the New Economic Policy. During the 1920s there was active competition among different leaders and groups within the Party on the resolution of the problems facing Soviet society; the followers of Bukharin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Tomsy and Stalin contended on questions of agricultural policy, industrialization, and foreign policy. While the centre-right alliance of those around Stalin and Bukharin had the upper hand in the period after Lenin's death (they were united on the continuation of the New Economic Policy and a fairly moderate international line), their left opponents continued to occupy leading positions.

In April 1926 the 'United Opposition', comprising followers of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, as well as the remnants of the Workers' Opposition and other leftists, formed to oppose the alliance of Bukharin's and Stalin's followers. They opposed the moderate industrial and agricultural policies that the leftists thought were undermining the socialist transition, as well as what was perceived as the leading group's failure to support revolutionary actions in other countries, for example, China.<sup>19</sup>

For organizing this loosely knit organization in violation of the 1921 Party statutes, its leaders were expelled from the Central Committee, but not from the Party. On the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the

institutionalized a multiparty system in which the minor non-Communist Parties are allied to the dominant Communist Party in some type of a national unity front which provides a common list of candidates in elections. The amount of autonomy and influence possessed by the minor parties in such systems varies from country to country and, over time, but in all cases they are subordinate to the Communist Party. The two major non-Communist Parties in Poland, for example, The United Peasants Party and the Democratic Party, played a somewhat independent role in the 1956-81 period, especially in the year and a half after the summer of 1980 (mostly in lobbying for the special interests of their constituencies, the peasantry and middle-class intelligentsia respectively).



United Opposition organized street demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad, with a result that Zinoviev and Trotsky, the two most prominent leaders of the left, were expelled from the Party. The 15th Congress held in December 1927 declared 'adherence to the opposition, and propaganda of its views, to be incompatible with membership in the Party.'<sup>20</sup> Trotsky, unyielding, was forced to go into (comfortable) exile in Central Asia, and finally, at the beginning of 1929, was expelled from the country; he was allowed to take all his personal effects and papers with him. Throughout the mid-1930s, internal opposition within the Party, even of the most aggressive type, such as that of Trotsky, was treated with relative benevolence.

The relatively high level of tolerance of the New Economic Policy period in Soviet history was brought to an end by a deteriorating international and agricultural situation. In May 1926 there was a military coup in Poland, led by anti-Communist General Pilsudski, 'hero' of the 1920 Polish invasion of the Ukraine. In 1927, the Communist Party of China, which had begun to play a strong and growing role in that country, was repressed and thousands of its members massacred. In 1927 Britain broke off diplomatic relations, while relations with France became strained. Soviet leaders began to predict an imminent economic crisis of capitalism, and hence the outbreak of a new inter-imperialist war. Further, the food supply from the countryside to the cities decreased radically over the 1926-28 period, precipitating a growing crisis in the Party's relationship to the peasantry. In the 1926-28 period, as the agricultural crisis heightened, the independent journals and printing houses were either closed down or co-ordinated with Party policy, to prevent them from becoming alternative centres for the mobilization of public opinion.<sup>21</sup> Party discipline was again tightened and the role of the Party in the nomination processes, especially in the rural areas, considerably enhanced.

### **How History Judges: I Famine and Collectivization (1928-34)**

1928 witnessed a radical shift in the general approach of the CPSU both to international and domestic questions. At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International held that year, it was predicted that the world capitalist economy would soon collapse into depression and that the resultant shortage of markets would provoke another period of inter-imperialist warfare. Given such conditions, it was expected both that the revolutionary class struggle would revive and that renewed attacks on the Soviet Union could be expected. Such an analysis dictated that the USSR quickly modernize its economy and acquire a modern defensive military establishment in order to protect itself from the expected foreign onslaught. This primary inspiration of the 1928-31 period was sharply articulated in a speech of the Party's general secretary in February 1931:

Sometimes people ask whether it is not possible to slow the pace



somewhat, to hold back the movement. No, comrades, that is impossible! It is impossible to reduce the pace. On the contrary, it should be increased as much as is within our power. . . . To reduce the pace means to lag. And the laggards are beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we do not want it! The history of old Russia consisted, among other things, of being beaten continuously for her backwardness. The Mongol khans beat her. The Turkish boys beat her. The Swedish feudal lords beat her. The Polish-Lithuanian landlords beat her. The Anglo-French capitalists beat her. The Japanese barons beat her. All beat her because of her backwardness — because of military backwardness, of cultural backwardness, of governmental backwardness, of industrial backwardness, of agricultural backwardness. They beat her because it was profitable and could be done without punishment. . . . Do you want for our socialist fatherland to be beaten and lose its independence. If you don't want this, you should in the shortest time liquidate its backwardness. . . . We lag behind the advanced countries by 50 to 100 years. We must make up this distance in 10 years. Either we do this or they crush us.<sup>22</sup>

A central part of the radical shift in the CPSU's general policies in 1928 was the initiation of a 'cultural revolution' which affected all aspects of educational, artistic, literary, academic, urban as well as industrial and agricultural policy. The cultural revolution's central focus was rapid modernization through central planning, speedy industrialization and modernization of agriculture, while promoting and celebrating working-class and proletarian culture. Social engineering (planning), rank and file attacks on bureaucrats, dissemination of the idea that science, planning and dedication together could produce a great leap forward, rapid promotion of those from working-class backgrounds, insistence that the arts and social sciences adopt a Marxist content, class war against the remnants of the bourgeoisie (especially in the intelligentsia) and the active encouragement of futurist projects, were all major aspects of this first cultural revolution (the Chinese 'Proletarian Cultural Revolution' 35 years later had largely similar aims). To quote Fitzpatrick:

Cultural revolution had many facets. It was a worker-promotion movement linked to a political campaign to discredit the 'Right Opposition' within the Party. It was an iconoclastic youth movement directed against 'bureaucratic' authority. It was a process whereby militant Communist groups in the professions established local dictatorships and attempted to revolutionize their disciplines. It was finally, a heyday for revolutionary theorists and 'hare-brained schemas' whose blueprints for the new society not only attracted disciplines among the communist cultural militants but also in many cases gained solid institutional support.<sup>23</sup>



Cultural revolution also involved a response on the part of the leadership to pressures within the Communist movement and the society as a whole. The class-war concept of confrontation between proletariat and bourgeoisie reflected real social tensions between the materially disadvantaged and the privileged. The anti-bureaucratic drive of cultural revolution – often verging on an attack on established authority *per se* – reflected real grievances of the younger generation. Within the professions, Communists and non-Communists tended to gather in potentially antagonistic camps; the appeal for ‘proletarian hegemony’ in scholarship and the arts did not originally come from the Party leadership, but from groups within the professions and scholarly institutions.<sup>24</sup>

In the words of Hough and Fainsod:

The cultural revolution in the Soviet Union had, on a somewhat lesser scale, much the same spirit as its Chinese counterpart four decades later. Individual specialists often were harassed by local forces; purges were conducted within the bureaucracy and the universities; culture became politicized as the radical figures in the various cultural realms were unleashed to launch frontal attacks upon the established cultural authorities (the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment, which supervised education and the arts, as well as the non-Communist intelligentsia); and many utopians took advantage of the situation to push forward their pet projects.<sup>25</sup>

According to Hough and Fainsod:

the plan opened up an exhilarating period of struggle and combat, a leap forward into the New Jerusalem. . . . The air was electric with positions to be stormed, class enemies to be destroyed, and fortresses to be built. . . . The last remnants of private capitalism and the old ‘bourgeois cultural’ appeared to be headed for extinction.<sup>26</sup>

Cultural struggle was waged in the universities to establish ‘proletarian hegemony’ in the various academic disciplines. Socialist realism was actively promoted as the only truly proletarian art and literature. The pre-1928 policies of the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment were attacked by young Communists as too eclectic in their toleration of different art forms, including even the most traditional, and for advancing traditional educational institutions. Anti-Marxist professors were purged from the social science faculties of universities, and Party activists now came to dominate the university governing boards, and insisted that universities both actively recruit students of proletarian background and teach proletarian values. The intelligentsia vigorously debated its role in the new society; students challenged their professors, making them undergo examination and



're-election' to their positions. Younger, more militant scholars, with programmes for focusing their research and writing on problems of practical relevance to society and the economy overthrew the dominance of the older more traditional authorities in discipline after discipline. Bureaucratic administrative forms were attacked and innovative methods experimented with. Writers enthusiastically read their works before factory audiences and worked with workers on collective histories of industrial enterprises.

Much of the thrust of the Soviet Cultural Revolution was in education, both in order to quickly create a new generation of Red and expert working class technicians and intellectuals to staff the professional and administrative positions in the rapidly industrializing economy, and to develop a new proletarian culture appropriate to a society which was consolidating proletarian socialist institutions, especially the creation of the 'New Soviet Man'.<sup>27</sup>

Both the first Five Year Plan (for rapid industrialization), and the campaign for the modernization of agriculture through the creation of large scale units utilizing modern industrial technology, were central aspects of the storming the heavens philosophy of which the Soviet Cultural Revolution of 1928-31 was the ideological manifestation. The campaign for the collectivization of agriculture, which was launched in 1928 and radically accelerated in the winter of 1929-30, can be understood only as an integral part of this 'general line'.

Russian agriculture was extremely backward. Not only had modern agricultural methods not yet made an impact, but one-fourth of the peasants did not even own a horse (less than half had a team of oxen or horses). Many poor dwarf peasants had to pull their homemade and inefficient wooden ploughs themselves. Further, small holdings in many areas were split by inheritance into tiny plots separated by significant distances both from the peasant's dwellings and from each other, as well as serving as a further obstacle to eventual mechanization. While about 25-30% of the peasants were dwarf-holders using wooden ploughs without beasts of burden (i.e. poor peasants), and about 6% were *kulaks* (rich peasants) who employed the landless rural proletariat and dwarf peasants (part-time) to produce a significant surplus for themselves. The bulk of the peasantry in the 1920s were 'middle peasants' – those who had more or less enough land as well as a minimum of equipment and beasts to maintain their families through their own labour.<sup>28</sup>

In the 1927-28 period Soviet society experienced an increasingly serious food crisis. Because the peasants were themselves consuming a much higher percentage of their output than they had done before the Revolution, the quantity they sold to the towns from 1923 to 1928 averaged only 50% of that they had provided between 1909 and 1913; in the years 1927 and 1928 the percentage was significantly lower than in the 1923-28 period. In 1927 it was estimated that the grain provided to the cities was only about two-thirds of that required; in 1928 grain deliveries declined to 70% of the 1927 level. Richer peasants' attempts to drive the price of grain up by withholding it from the market coincided with the state's attempt to subsidize the consumption of the working class, while also generating funds for investment



in industry.<sup>29</sup> This action by the rich peasants also radically affected the ability of the Soviet state to import Western technology to facilitate industrialization. Before the War, Russia, as one of the world's leading grain exporters, had exported 12 million tons of grain annually, and in 1926-27, 2 million tons; in 1928 the USSR had to import a quarter of a million tons.<sup>30</sup> By withholding grain the richer peasants had produced a serious crisis for the socialist regime.

The Party and government's immediate response was to take 'extraordinary measures' including sending detachments of workers to the countryside to confiscate the hoarded grain. Class struggle was encouraged in the countryside. Poor and landless peasants were mobilized to struggle against the *kulaks*, e.g. 25% of confiscated grain was to be distributed to the rural poor. The Party's popular mobilization of workers and the rural poor against the *kulaks* often led to crude and excessive actions; further, the policy of forced requisitions produced only a short-run increase in food deliveries. The *kulaks* response was to decrease production, thus reducing their confiscatable stores.<sup>31</sup> The Party denounced the *kulaks* for 'disrupting the Soviet economic policy' and, in July 1928, directed its cadre 'to strike hard at the *kulaks*' (a radical reversal of the new economic policy of 'alliance with the peasantry' — support which the Party now felt the *kulaks* had abused).<sup>32</sup> At the same time, however, the Party renounced the continuation of extraordinary measures.

As incentives for the peasants to increase production new directives were issued to raise grain prices by 15 to 20% and to increase the availability of manufactured goods in the countryside. Throughout the second half of 1928, the Party press repeatedly asserted that there would be no more searches and forced seizures of grain.<sup>33</sup> But in the winter of 1928-29, the rich peasants' failure to respond by increasing grain deliveries led to further search and seizure operations (less grain, in fact, was delivered than during the previous year; grain rationing now had to be introduced in the cities). Two winters of forced requisitioning interspersed by a period of failed attempts at reconciliation was invoking great antagonism between the Party (with its urban worker and poor peasant backers) and the *kulaks*, while, in Roy Medvedev's words, 'The country was threatened with the complete disorganization of the whole national economy, and with famine imminent, something had to be done at once. . . .'<sup>34</sup> Collectivization, advocated for many years by the Party's left (e.g. Trotsky, Zinoviev) became increasingly necessary.

That the progressive nature of the New Economic Policy, which encouraged agricultural production by allowing the peasants to enrich themselves, had largely run its course was becoming obvious by 1927 and 1928. Modernization, and the country's ability to successfully defend itself in the event of a further series of foreign interventions such as had occurred in the 1918-21 period, made the modernization of agriculture essential. Consequently, the decision was taken at the 15th Party Congress to encourage collectivization. The First Five Year Plan, approved at the end of 1928,



envisaged 20% of the peasants in collective farms by the end of 1933.<sup>35</sup> A gradual process of persuasion, combined with economic incentives was planned, as the development of large scale units was more or less to keep pace with the growth in output of modern agricultural machinery. The peasants were promised mechanized equipment and state credit if they joined the collectives that were to be set up, 'everything will be supplied — join the collective farms'.<sup>36</sup> In autumn 1928, however, in the face of the increased food shortage, the pace of collectivization was radically accelerated.

The Party had extremely high hopes for the efficacy of collectivization. In 1929 the majority saw it as the mechanism whereby a highly efficient modern agriculture, on which to base rapid industrialization could be constructed, as well as flooding the cities with food. The Soviets interpreted the rapid modernization of agriculture in the US as a proof of how agriculture could be rapidly transformed 'to the level of an extractive industry'. It was also seen as a mechanism to develop socialist consciousness in the peasantry. To quote Davies:

During the autumn of 1929, plans for mechanization were greatly expanded . . . enthusiasm for American achievements in agricultural technology mounted, and the Soviet leaders became confident that Soviet socialist agriculture could soon outstrip that of the capitalist West. A *Pravda* editorial proclaimed that the example of the United States had 'compelled bourgeois economists to admit that in 10-15 years agriculture will have reached the level of an extractive industry'.<sup>37</sup>

Although the policy of immediate collectivization was a hasty improvisation in face of a serious crisis, it was not seen by the leaders or their supporters as a desperate remedy for a mortal sickness. On the contrary, this was for them a time of great hope. The substantial industrial progress of the past three years and the burgeoning capital construction industry in the summer of 1929 provided a basis for believing that the vast programmes of the revised five-year plans might be achieved. The successful development of industry would in turn make possible within a very few years the supply of agricultural machinery and fertilizers which would transform agricultural production.<sup>38</sup>

The 'Second Revolution' was begun. In the words of Isaac Deutscher:

In its scope and immediate impact upon the life of some 160 million people the second revolution was even more sweeping and radical than the first. It resulted in Russia's rapid industrialization; it compelled more than a hundred million peasants to abandon their small, primitive holdings and to set up collective farms; it ruthlessly tore the primeval wooden plough from the hands of the *muzhik* and forced him to grasp the wheel of a modern tractor; it drove tens of millions of illiterate people to school and made them learn to read and write; and spiritually



it detached European Russia from Europe and brought Asiatic Russia nearer to Europe. The rewards of that revolution were astounding; but so was its cost. . . . It takes a great effort of the imagination to gauge the enormousness and the complexity of that upheaval for which hardly any historical precedent can be found.<sup>39</sup>

Deutscher went on to argue that the collectivization and industrialization policies begun in 1928 were responsible for the defeat of the nazis:

The truth was that the war could not have been won without the intensive industrialization of Russia, and of her eastern provinces in particular. Nor could it have been won without the collectivization of large numbers of farms. The *muzhik* of 1930, who had never handled a tractor or any other machine, would have been of little use in modern war. Collectivized farming, with its machine-tractor stations scattered all over the country, had been the peasant's preparatory school for mechanized warfare. The rapid raising of the average standard of education had also enabled the Red Army to draw on a considerable reserve of intelligent officers and men. 'We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this lag in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us' – so Stalin had spoken exactly ten years before Hitler set out to conquer Russia. His words, when they were recalled now, could not but impress people as a prophecy brilliantly fulfilled, as a most timely call to action. And, indeed, a few year's delay in the modernization of Russia might have made all the difference between victory and defeat.<sup>40</sup>

In October 1928, a total of 200,000, or only 14.5% of Party members were peasants or agricultural workers. There was only one peasant Party member for every 125 peasant households, compared to one in ten for urban workers, and only one Party cell for every four village Soviets (the typical village Soviet included several rural settlements). There were, however, substantially more (about one million) members of the Young Communist League (the Komsomol) in the countryside. It was estimated that each rural settlement averaged around two people who were either full or candidate members of the Party, or members of the Komsomol;<sup>41</sup> many of whom were veterans of the Red Army. Thus, the density of active Party cadre in the countryside was clearly inadequate to mobilize the poor and middle peasants for the collectivization movement.

In order to generate enthusiasm for the collectivization campaign and to lead the organization of collectives the Party transferred large numbers of urban workers and Party cadre to the countryside. The November 1929 Plenum of the Central Committee decided to send 25,000 politically experienced industrial workers to the countryside permanently. Over 70,000 workers volunteered and about 27,000 of these were sent, and were later followed by many more politically conscious workers. It was intended that



these workers would win over the peasants to large-scale socialist production, and teach them the necessary technical and organization skills to make the collectives work.<sup>42</sup> In the Ukraine alone 23,000 urban workers went to the countryside to supplement 23,500 administrators in helping organize the collectives.<sup>43</sup> Altogether about a quarter of a million industrial workers and cadres were eventually sent to the countryside to supplement the cadre already there.<sup>44</sup>

Those sent to the countryside organized educational programmes for the peasants. In the Ukraine alone in the early weeks of 1930 almost 300,000 peasants received short courses in the operation of collectives, many of these courses were arranged by individual trade unions and factories which were sponsoring the new collective farms. The Red Army also played an active role by releasing 30,000 soldiers specially trained for agricultural work to the collectives in autumn 1929, and began training 100,000 more recruits for the same purpose. The Red Army played an especially important role in training tractor drivers and mechanics as well as large numbers of lower and middle level agricultural specialists.<sup>45</sup>

In autumn 1929, the Party decided that an acceleration in the pace of collectivization was essential in order to speed the process of agricultural modernization and increase food deliveries to the cities. By 1 July 1929 more than twice as many peasants had joined the new collectives as the original plan had called for, but this still represented only 4% of all peasants. By the end of 1929, 7.6% of peasant households had joined. That collectives encompassed only 3.6% of the cultivated land (less than half of the percentage of peasants in them) indicates that it was mostly poor peasants who were joining. Relatively few middle, and almost no rich, peasants responded to the collectivization campaign.<sup>46</sup>

At the November 1929 Plenum of the Central Committee a harsh line was taken towards the *kulaks* who, it was now decided, must be largely isolated rather than won over. The experience of the previous year with both grain collections to feed the cities and the initial steps towards collectivization had convinced the majority of the Party leadership that this stratum was essentially hostile to collectivization:

We cannot re-educate the *kulak*, and moreover no educational tasks at all in relation to the *kulak* – apart from ‘educating’ him by methods of undeviating and decisive class struggle with him – can be the subject of our solicitude and experimentation. Economic isolation and, if it is needed in a particular case, the use also of administrative measures against the *kulak* – this is the line along which we will be able to find the specific forms of the most suitable solution to the problem of the *kulak* in a given place and conditions.<sup>47</sup>

Rich peasants were now under official and unofficial pressure to abandon voluntarily and without compensation, farm buildings and draft animals, and share their common product with poor, landless and middle peasants,



and perform the bulk of their labour co-operatively.

On 5 January 1930 the Party's Central Committee decided that stricter measures were necessary; local Party branches were instructed to give the highest priority to persuading the peasants to join. State tractor stations were organized mainly if not exclusively to service the collective farms. The dwarf peasants and landless labourers were mobilized to spearhead the collective movement. These peasants, comprising about 25-30% of the total rural population, were promised a significant improvement in their living standards in the new collectives, which would be endowed with some of the rich peasants' agricultural implements and chattels, as well as with machinery provided by the state. Many, with and without the zealous leadership of local Party officials, applied intimidation, the threat of force, and occasionally actual force to produce the 'spectacular results' of the winter of 1930.<sup>48</sup>

The Party adopted a policy of 'dekulakization' which meant the expropriation of the excess property of the *kulaks* and their forced reduction to the economic status of middle peasants. The Party's General Secretary declared: 'This means that we have gone over from a policy of *limiting* the exploiting tendencies of the *kulak* to a policy of *eliminating* the *kulak* as a class.'<sup>49</sup> Instructions to rural Party units read:

*Kulaks* shall not be admitted to Kolkhozy; *kulak* means of production shall be confiscated and transferred to the Indivisible Funds of Kolkhozy in districts of comprehensive collectivisation in accordance with the decisions of poor and middle peasants combining together in Kolkhozy, and of local Soviets; *kulaks* shall be allocated distant land and the worst land; malicious *kulak* elements shall be exiled from the districts.<sup>50</sup>

Open class warfare broke out in the countryside. On 5 February 1930 a decree was issued which, after public hearings, empowered the assemblies of poor and landless peasants to order the deportation of non-cooperative rich peasants, as well as to expropriate all their property except a subsistence minimum of equipment and personal property. The decree, however, also provided that deportation orders would not be final until the local authorities affirmed the decisions and appropriate arrangements had been made for resettlement — usually on virgin land in the East.<sup>51</sup>

In the winter of 1930 the mechanisms used to pressure those classified as middle peasants to join the collectives included assigning to those who resisted the worst, most remote land; the old Russian Mir tradition of re-allocation of the village land was assumed by the local Soviets. In some districts where over-enthusiastic officials declared that 'collectivization was 100% complete', peasants who elected to remain outside the collectives, in spite of official declarations, received no arable land. High and increasing taxes were imposed on middle peasants who did not join collectives; collective farmers not only received the best land but were taxed at a low level. In many cases actual physical abuse of reluctant middle peasants



occurred.<sup>52</sup>

That property expropriated from *kulaks* was assigned to the new collectives together with the over-zealousness of many Party cadre led poor peasants to take aggressive action against the rich peasants, and treat many recalcitrant middle peasants as *kulaks*; in some areas 15-20% of peasants were treated as if they were *kulaks*, contrary both to Party policy and common sense.<sup>53</sup> In Roy Medvedev's words,

In some places groups of peasants explicitly decreed the expropriation of middle peasants, ordering the confiscation of such luxuries as sewing machines, mirrors, and beds. In one raion investigations revealed that only three of 34 households subjected to dekulakization were actual kulak. There were thousands and thousands of such cases. As a result of such actions (greatly magnified by rumours and paranoia) large numbers of middle peasants ceased equivocating about the new collectivization policy, and whether or not they were successfully pressured to join, came to resist (or at best became hostile to the project).<sup>54</sup>

Within two months approximately half of all peasants were pressured into joining the collectives. The result of the intense pressure and rural class struggle of January and February 1930 was disarray in the countryside, along with insurmountable organizational problems for the new collectives, flooded with largely unenthusiastic peasants lacking sufficient equipment or materials to begin the 1930 crop. Panic and terror swept the countryside. In Deutscher's words, many peasants,

... decided to bring in as little as possible of their property to the collective farms which they imagined to be state owned factories, in which they themselves would become mere factory hands. In desperation they slaughtered their cattle, smashed implements, and burned crops. This was the muzhik's great Luddite-like rebellion.<sup>55</sup>

Some rich peasants slaughtered their animals rather than contribute them to the collectives, more because the fodder to keep them alive was appropriated to feed the cities. Between spring 1929 and spring 1930 the number of farm animals in the USSR fell by 25%.<sup>56</sup> To have continued the hectic measures of January and February would have resulted in famine and possibly collapse of the regime.

On 2 March 1930, summing up those measures, the Central Committee of the Party issued a statement criticizing its local cadre and poor peasant supporters for becoming 'dizzy with success', ignoring the basic rule that peasants must join the collectives voluntarily, and alienating the majority of middle peasants who, until the winter of 1930, had been undecided about whether or not to join (thus pushing them into the arms of the *kulaks*). The Party also emphasized that the collective form socialized only the land, draft animals and larger machinery, leaving cows, sheep, chickens, pigs and



other personal property in the hands of the individual peasants. The decree read in part:

The Kolkhoz must not be imposed by force. That would be stupid and reactionary. The Kolkhoz movement must be based on the active support of the main mass of the peasantry . . .

What can these distortions lead to? To the strengthening of our enemies and the complete discrediting of the idea of the Kolkhoz movement . . .

Success often intoxicates people, they begin to get dizzy with success, lose the ability to understand reality; a tendency appears to overestimate one's own strength and to underestimate the strength of one's opponent, and adventurist attempts are made to solve all the problems of socialist construction 'in two ticks'.<sup>57</sup>

As a result of the March 1930 decree, the errors of the previous two months were largely corrected and pressure on the rich, and especially the middle, peasants considerably relaxed. More than half the peasants who, in January and February, had been induced to join the collectives, left them within a few weeks. By September 1930, the percentage of peasants in collectives had dropped to 21% of the total (from a peak of about 58% in early March).<sup>58</sup>

Subsequently subtler incentive structures (and a balance between collective and individual interests) were employed to induce the middle peasants to join the collectives. Private plots, from which peasants could sell their produce on an individual basis, were institutionalized; profit sharing, rather than set wage payments, became the norm. Most state farms were disbanded and their land and resources given free to the collectives.<sup>59</sup> This more moderate approach after 1930 resulted in a fairly rapid pace of collectivization. By 1933 about 60%, by 1934 about 75%, and by 1940, 97% of peasants were organized in collective or state farms.<sup>60</sup> This increased pace was, however, not matched by the ability to successfully organize and equip the new, large scale agricultural units.

The slaughter of farm animals by rich and middle peasants in the winter of 1930 together with the continuingly serious problems of organization of the collectives and motivation of the peasants meant, in Isaac Deutscher's words, that 'Rapid mechanization of agriculture now became a matter of life and death'. The food crisis continued unabated. In 1929 the average Soviet urban dwellers' annual consumption of meat, poultry and fat was 48 pounds, in 1930 it was 33, falling to 27 in 1931, and less than 17 in the famine year of 1932.<sup>61</sup>

The efficient organization of the collectives was impeded by the continued attempt to generate resources for rapid industrialization of the agricultural sector, as well as by the failure of industry to provide mechanized farm equipment with the promptness planned. To quote Davies:



... the unrelenting drive for industrial expansion carried with it a determined effort to squeeze agriculture still further. In the autumn of 1930, the state collections were much larger and covered a much wider range of products; and simultaneously taxes and other payments were substantially increased in the cases of both the Kolkhoz and the individual peasants. Investment in agriculture was limited, both because state credits were restricted and because all kinds of building materials, diverted to the major industrial projects, disappeared from the countryside. All these measures further weakened economic incentives to agricultural production. Secondly, the lag in achieving industrial plans affected the planned expansion of the tractor, lorry and agricultural engineering industries; tractors were not provided in sufficient quantities in the early 1930s to compensate for the reduction in the number of horses.<sup>62</sup>

The rich, and many abused (as well as paranoid) middle peasants in the winter of 1930 responded by fighting against the organized poor peasants and Party cadre; many Communists and poor peasant leaders were assassinated. In the words of a leading anti-Soviet historian of the CPSU: 'There was open war in the villages and the desperate peasants did not hesitate to kill any Communists, regarding them as natural enemies'.<sup>63</sup> Other acts of violence were committed against government and Party buildings and personnel; and some riots and small scale insurrections had to be suppressed by the Army. In response to the massive economic sabotage which occurred over the course of a couple of years, as well as violence against the Party and its supporters in the countryside, the Party again adopted extraordinary measures — measures not seen since the Civil War period of 1918-20.

Rich peasants were classified into three categories: (1) 'active counter-revolutionaries' who were subject to criminal proceedings, which sometimes resulted in execution; (2) 'counter-revolutionary elements' who were exiled and resettled after the confiscation of most of their productive property; and (3) 'those who had to be drawn into socially useful labour and who were given the opportunity for re-education through socially useful production', a category which covered most of the rich peasants.<sup>64</sup> The total percentage of those classified as *kulaks* was not to exceed 3-5% in grain areas and 2-3% in non-grain areas. About 20% of *kulaks* were to be classified in categories (1) and (2). Party instructions exempted from expropriation or exile rich peasants who either had sons in the army or offspring who were teachers.

In the civil war atmosphere which, exacerbated by the growing food crisis, at time erupted in the countryside, the formal procedures and legal guarantees for the rich peasants were sometimes disregarded. In some regions, particularly in the Kuban, Don and Ukraine, there were grain strikes by both individual and collective farm peasants, who cut back their acreage and refused to deliver grain to the state; in many areas thefts from the collective granaries became a serious problem.<sup>65</sup> Economic sabotage by the rich peasants continued. As a result of these serious problems the great promise of



collectivization — the development of a modern efficient agriculture with a rapidly expanding output — remained unfulfilled. By 1932 'vast tracts of land were left untilled. Famine stalked the towns and the black steppe of the Ukraine'.<sup>66</sup> In 1933 agricultural production was actually lower than in 1928.

In response the collectivization policy was further reformed. In January 1933 agricultural procurement was reorganized. Each collective was given a fixed delivery quota in advance of the harvest; that remaining could either be sold in the free market where prices were considerably higher than those paid by the government, or retained for the use of its members. This new system provided considerable incentives for the peasants to exceed their planned targets.<sup>67</sup>

Although neither the measures taken by the Party cadre and poor peasants, nor the level of resistance of those peasants who opposed collectivization ever again reached the level of the winter of 1930, in order to deal with the continually deteriorating food supplies, increased pressure was once more applied to facilitate collectivization. In response, the level of resistance — mostly passive — lack of effort, and individual but widespread acts of theft (usually of grain) increased. Consequently the measures taken against peasant opposition were again intensified. Collective farms that failed to fulfil their grain procurement quotas were largely denied manufactured goods from the towns which they requested. A decree, issued in 1932, made stealing collective property punishable by death or ten years forced labour, according to the circumstances.<sup>68</sup> Although never reaching the 1930-31 level, deportations of those that actively opposed collectivization continued into 1932 and 1933.

Both the first and 'second' revolutions, because they both were accompanied by (virtually) civil war, necessarily produced the response of any state measures to secure the predominant property relations, as well as its own authority. The extreme desperation and extent both of the civil war emergencies and the great collectivization upheavals was manifested in that both periods (1921 and 1922-3) ended with famine. In addition to invoking 'extraordinary measures' against active opposition, it must be stressed that the result was also a significant moderation of state and party policy in order to provide peasants with sufficient positive incentives to increase food deliveries to the cities.

The standard penalty for peasants accused of counter-revolutionary activity was confiscation of property and resettlement. Between 300,000 and 380,000 peasant families (1,200,000-1,500,000 individuals) were exiled to distant locations during the 1930-33 collectivization drive (mostly in 1930 and 1931). At the beginning of 1935 there were approximately 1,100,000 exiles, about 650,000 in special settlements attached to industrial, construction or transportation projects and about 450,000 in special collective farms.<sup>69</sup> The majority of displaced peasants were deprived of their voting rights and sentenced to exile without confinement and allowed to keep an essential minimum of agricultural instruments to begin life anew as poor/middle peasants. The most active opponents, however, were sentenced



to exile with forced labour; most of these served sentences of five years, after which their voting rights were restored. Special settlements were organized for the resettled rich peasants in the virgin lands of the east (in Kazakhstan, Siberia and the Urals). Given the extreme conditions consequent upon food shortages and the virtual civil war atmosphere, conditions during the forced transport of the rich peasants, and during the first years of their resettlement, were rarely generous; thousands died of disease, starvation and exposure during these years.<sup>70</sup> Some left the virgin lands after their period of forced exile was over, but the bulk of them were not allowed to return to their native regions. In late 1941 there were still approximately 930,000 former *kulaks* settled where they had been relocated in the early 1930s.<sup>71</sup> That the number of *kulaks* still in their places of exile both in 1935 and 1941 was approximately the same as the number forcibly relocated in the 1930-33 period, indicates that most of them survived the often harsh conditions of transit and beginning a new life.

In the famine of 1932-33 hundreds of thousands of peasants (especially infants) of all classes in the countryside died of starvation and illnesses aggravated by malnutrition. The Great Famine of 1932-33 primarily affected the Southern part of the Ukraine and to a lesser degree the northern Caucasus, the Volga region, and Kazakhstan, as well as other parts of Central Asia.

The number of peasants who died in these periods (including those who died during and immediately after their forced exile, and those executed for counter-revolutionary activity) has been wildly exaggerated. Based on rumour and unjustified assumptions about demographic trends, estimates have ranged as high as the tens of millions. Medvedev, discrediting such wild guesses, states, 'Western publications frequently give exaggerated figures for the number of people who died during the Stalin terror or the years of war.' Referring to the gross exaggerations given credibility by Solzhenitsyn, Medvedev argues, 'The simplest demographic calculation shows this to be implausible. For if these figures were regarded as accurate, it would have to be the case that from 1918 to 1953 not one person died a natural death in the Soviet Union.'<sup>72</sup>

But Medvedev himself lends credence to the less wild estimates by citing an estimate, made on the basis of gaps in the age structure and demographic projections, of as many as three million infant deaths owing to the 1932-33 famine.<sup>73</sup> This estimate assumes: (a) that even in conditions of extreme famine, instability, and virtual civil war, peasants would conceive and give birth at the same rate as in less precarious periods; (2) that abortion or infanticide (intentional or not) did not significantly increase; and (3) that there were as many women of maximum reproductive age in 1932-33 as before or after. All of these assumptions are erroneous. All peasants have traditional techniques of birth control and are thus able to limit their reproduction to a significant degree; it is the economic benefit attendant upon having large families which is operative – a factor not applicable during famines – not ignorance of birth control. Legal abortion was so widely practised in this period that, in 1936, the state banned it as part of the



campaign to increase the population. Lastly, to quote Wheatcroft:

As is well known, the First World War, Civil War and early years of the 1920s caused a great gap in births in these years. The age cohort born in 1914 would have been 16 in 1930 and so would have just been entering the period of major reproduction. Consequently, Lorimer and other scholars have concluded that the age structure of the population would have led to a decline in births throughout the early 1930s and until the missing populations born into the 1914-22 age cohorts had passed on well into the future.<sup>74</sup>

Other exaggerated estimates of the number who died during these periods are based on apparent discrepancies between the 1926 and 1939 (or 1959) census figures, and the number of people who should have been in these census categories assuming earlier rates of population growth or, alternatively, the actual rate of growth of other populations at the same time. Such estimates assume that a decline in the reported population, or its failure to grow at its 'normal' rate, is largely a reflection of deaths from famine, abuse or execution. Not only are fewer live births to be expected during times of famine and trouble — as well as disproportionately high infant mortality — many people emigrate from areas of famine in search of food, work, or refuge. In the Soviet Union in the 1930-33 period millions of destitute peasants migrated to the cities to take up jobs in the industrializing urban economy, others left the regions of greatest destitution to settle elsewhere; some left the Soviet Union altogether especially, it seems, some nomadic peoples of Central Asia, who had largely been required to settle during the collectivization period.

In 1928 the policies of rapid industrialization, along with collectivization, resulted in increased levels of urban opposition, especially among engineers and other segments of the technical intelligentsia, and consequently a fair degree of political repression. In 1928 the first public trial of members of the technical intelligentsia was held: Shakhty and a number of other Soviet and foreign engineers were tried for industrial sabotage in collaboration with foreign opponents of the USSR. In autumn 1930, eight technical specialists were arrested and publicly tried for 'wrecking and counter-revolutionary activities' (as members of the so-called Industrial Party). Their death sentences were, however, commuted, and within a few years they were restored to their jobs.<sup>75</sup> In September 1930 48 food distribution officials were tried for sabotaging food supplies; all 48 were shot.<sup>76</sup> In March 1931 a number of ex-Menshevik leaders were publicly tried and sentenced to prison for 'wrecking' and being counter-revolutionaries.<sup>77</sup> By mid-1931, however, the degree of non-cooperation and active sabotage by the technical intelligentsia had lessened considerably, and, in response, the state's attitude was relaxed, in so far as the number of those arrested and tried for such activities decreased after spring 1931, while those convicted now received more lenient sentences.



An element of paranoia may have actuated some of these arrests and trials. But without question the world's first socialist society's enemies, both outside and inside the USSR, did engage in actions designed to weaken it, and popular mobilization against saboteurs did reduce the level of both active sabotage and passive resistance to socialist construction. (Similar phenomena occurred after the Chinese, Cuban, Angolan and Nicaraguan revolutions.)

In 1931-32 a general liberalization trend began; the cultural revolution was over. The 'proletarian' guidelines in the social sciences and the arts were relaxed and writers who had been suppressed in 1929 as too bourgeois were allowed to return to their jobs. Educational policies reverted to more traditional practices. Egalitarian wage policies came under increasing attack; deportation of rich peasants for actively resisting collectivization stopped in May 1933. The liberal trend peaked in 1934. In this year the security police (the State Political Directorate of the Commissariat of the Interior), the GPU, was abolished and its functions restructured as part of a reorganized People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, which reflected a curtailed role for the security police. In July, the Ministry of Justice ordered a halt in the campaign of seeking out and prosecuting engineers and enterprise directors for 'wrecking and sabotage'. In the spring a partial amnesty was offered to rebellious *kulaks*, and in November the size of the private plots for collective farm peasants was increased. Leaders of oppositional tendencies in the Party were once again allowed to address public meetings. Work began on drafting a new liberal constitution which, in fact, culminated in 1936.<sup>78</sup>

This relative relaxation between 1929-31 and 1932-34 was a result of an improvement in both the industrial and the international situation of the Soviet Union. The technical intelligentsia's resistance to the new rapid industrialization policies decreased as: (1) the new policies proved to be effective in producing rapid rates of industrialization; and (2) a rapidly rising proportion of the technical intelligentsia were recruited from the children of workers and peasants, and trained in socialist institutions (most of the technical intelligentsia of the 1920s were from middle-class backgrounds, were trained in Czarist institutions, and had little sympathy for the revolution). A further factor securing the increased loyalty of the technical intelligentsia was the abolition of the extreme egalitarianism of pay which prevailed in the 1920s. A system of wage differentials provided the highly trained experts considerable positive motivation both to perform and upgrade their skills. In fact, in order to motivate this stratum, as well as the children of the working class and peasantry to obtain technical education quickly, the Party launched a public campaign against the 'egalitarian' errors of the previous period.

There was a significant relaxation in the international situation too. In the 1930-31 period the USSR feared invasion by the Japanese who were in the process of conquering Manchuria, and thus about to acquire a long border with Siberia. Additionally, there were fears that other Western powers, taking advantage of the disorganization in the countryside, would again



intervene in an attempt to overthrow the revolutionary regime (as in 1918–20). Japan did not invade Siberia and the rural situation became sufficiently stable to ensure that such countries as Poland, Britain or France were no longer tempted to intervene. In 1932 France and the USSR signed a non-aggression pact which pledged the two parties to assist each other in the case of an attack by a third power. In 1933, the new Roosevelt administration in the US recognized the USSR, and in 1934 the Soviet Union successfully applied for membership in the League of Nations, shortly after Nazi Germany had resigned. Generally, in the 1933–34 period, it seemed that the Soviet Union was no longer subject to strong international pressure; the Soviets did not yet consider the Hitler regime to be significantly different from that of the previous German government.

Soviet criminological theory, as well as their Marxist analysis of dealing with their opponents according to their class position, led to the adoption of a progressive position, in focusing on the structural causes of crime and opposition to socialist construction, rather than on punishment of individuals. The famous slogan: 'liquidate the *kulaks* as a class', in spite of anti-Soviet portrayals in the Western press at the time, meant just that: the expropriation of the means of production that allowed the rich peasants to live by the exploitation of the labour power of rural proletarians and their re-education through physical labour accompanied by socialist education. Likewise, throughout 1936, except in extraordinary conditions (such as the Civil War of 1918–1920, and the rural conflict of 1930–31) very few opponents were executed. The standard remedy for active opponents of the regime (as it was for common criminals) was socialist re-education, in good part through productive labour. This represented a humane and largely effective strategy, adopted by most other socialist countries, including China (for example, the 7 May Cadre Schools) and Vietnam (its treatment of the cadre of the old regime after 1975). Until 1937, the conditions applying to those actually confined for active opposition to the regime were considerably better than those for ordinary criminals; until 1937 torture was officially prohibited in the USSR (and, in fact, was rare). It was standard practice for those sentenced to a term in labour re-education camps in the remote region of the country to return to their old positions (as engineers, party leaders, etc.) after a relatively short time; the operation of these camps was very similar to the Chinese system operated for wayward bureaucrats and intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution.

Throughout 1937, ex-Party leaders who had been demoted, expelled, or sent into exile, were routinely brought back into leadership positions. Once they criticized their past practices they were released from banishment (for example, many of Trotsky's supporters, including numerous former supporters of the United Opposition of 1926–27, were released in 1928, after they had endorsed the new rapid industrialization line of the Party) and restored to high level positions in the Party and state.<sup>79</sup> For example, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomskey, leaders of the various oppositional factions in the Party in the 1924–29 period, were restored to



leadership positions — although never to the powerful positions they once held. Bukharin, for example, lost his important posts in 1929 including membership on the Politburo, the editorship of *Pravda* and the chairmanship of the Comintern for actively opposing the collectivization and rapid industrialization campaign. In the relatively tolerant climate during 1932-34, however, he was first made director of the research department of heavy industry and then given the responsible post of editor of *Izvestia*, which he held from 1934 to 1937. Tomsky, although he lost his position as leader of the trade unions and his seat on the Politburo (for the same reasons that Bukharin lost his position), remained on the Central Committee of the Party, and was re-elected at the 16th Party Congress in 1930. At the 17th Party Congress in 1934 both Tomsky and Bukharin were elected as candidate members of the Central Committee, as were other prominent, past opponents of the prevailing Party policies (for example, Rykov), and one of them, Piatakov, was elected as a full member.<sup>80</sup> Zinoviev and Kamenev who, together with Stalin, had represented the maximal leadership of the Party in 1924-26, were removed from the Politburo and other leading positions, and in 1927 they were expelled from the Party for active opposition, including organizing street demonstrations to oppose the Party's continuing endorsement of the moderate New Economic Policy. In 1928, when most of their earlier critique was finally incorporated into the Party's new programme of rapid industrialization and collectivization, they were both re-admitted and assigned relatively minor official posts. In 1932, they were once again expelled (and arrested) for oppositional activities, but again in the tolerant atmosphere prior to the Kirov assassination were re-admitted and again assigned Party work.

### **How History Judges II: The Growing Threat of Invasion and 'The Great Purge' (1935-39)**

What is generally known in the West as 'the Great Purge', a term wrought with connotations of intensive terror, massive arrests, show trials, and widespread executions, was actually a convergence of three very different phenomena: (1) a period of general membership screening in the Party; (2) an anti-bureaucracy campaign; and (3) a paranoia about spies, traitors and 'wreckers' attempting to overthrow the regime.

In Soviet Party history a 'purge' refers to a membership screening designed to rid the Party of lackadaisical, theoretically backward, ill-disciplined, passive, opportunist, and so on, members. Purges were implemented either by a process of systematic expulsions organized by special 'purge' commissions, or by local Party leaders, in which charges were brought against unreliable members, or by a process of validation or exchange of Party card in which members had to prove themselves. Such 'purges' had been a regular part of Party life since 1919. Interestingly, the Party purges of 1935 and 1937 resulted in significantly fewer expulsions than the previous four purges



that had taken place in 1919, 1921, 1929 and 1933.<sup>81</sup> All the purges mainly affected rank and file Party members.

Nineteen thirty-seven saw a partial return to the radicalism of the 1928-31 Cultural Revolution, especially to the campaigns against bureaucracy, which focused on encouraging the rank and file to attack the middle and local level Party leadership's bureaucratic methods, and on re-invigorating rank and file participation in Party life. The so-called 'democracy campaign' of 1937 resulted in the displacement of about half of the Party's middle and lower level leadership from their positions — but *not* generally 'purged', that is, not expelled from the Party, or accused of treason, spying or sabotage largely as a result of rank and file activities.

The 1936-38 period witnessed the arrests (and, in the case of the most prominent persons, public trials), and in many cases executions, of the majority of those in top leadership positions in Soviet society, especially in the military, Central Committee and economy. Additionally, a fair number of other, older political activists, falsely accused of treason, (that is, involvement in a conspiracy, with both the exiled Trotskyist opposition and the Japanese and German intelligence services, to overthrow the Soviet state) were similarly treated. Although significantly fewer people were affected than in the 'purge' and the 'democracy campaign', the prominence of those affected rendered these events the most dramatic of the three. The three spectacular Moscow trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938 invoked intense controversy, continuing even to this day. The 'purges', 'democracy campaign' and the attacks on the top leadership must each be understood as separate phenomenon.

Communist Party membership involved both special obligations and access to special benefits such as jobs (reserved for politically reliable people), as well as a certain prestige. As a result many people secured and maintained membership in the Party for other reasons than agreement with the Party's goals and political activism; many people even secured Party cards illegally. Until the mid-1930s the Party was, in practice, a fairly loose organization which exerted relatively little real control over its membership (there were many passive or irresponsible members) who were not held to account. The periodic purges (1919, 1921, 1929, 1933, 1935, 1937) were all designed to deal with this problem and, in the words of Party instructions, were directed to ensure 'iron proletarian discipline in the Party and to cleanse the Party's ranks of all unreliable, unstable and hanger-on elements'.<sup>82</sup> In the 1919 're-registration' 10-15% of the Party's total membership lost their Party cards; in 1921 Party purge 25%; in the 1929 purge, 11% (25% of whom were reinstated after appeals); in the 1933 *chistka* 17% were expelled; in the 1935 *proverka* 9%; and in the famous 1937 *Ezhovschina* again about 9% (the 1935 and 1937 purges were the smallest in terms of numbers affected).<sup>83</sup>

The decree setting up the rules of the 1933 validation of Party members specified that all Party members must present themselves before open proceedings (attended by both Party and non-Party members), give an account of the facts of their lives, explain how they fulfilled Party tasks, and discuss the efforts made to raise their 'ideological and theoretical level'. Each member



was then questioned by the validation commissioners and by rank and file Party and non-Party members.<sup>84</sup>

The laxness of Party members before the mid-1930s is indicated by such facts as: before the 1933 purge, between 32% and 60% (depending on the organization surveyed) of Party members did not even read the Party press; that the names of 50,000 dead, fictitious, or missing persons were on the active Party rolls at the beginning of 1934 (in some districts over 10% of the membership); and that Party units had lost contact with over 10% of members listed on their rolls.<sup>85</sup> The problem of inactive and irresponsible Party members, as well as the loose system of controls over membership, was largely as a result of the emphasis, during the 1920s, on the recruitment of large numbers of working-class members, with little attention given to criteria other than class background.

In the membership screening of 1929, 22% were expelled for 'defects in personal conduct', 17% for passivity, 12% for criminal offences (mostly involvement in petty crimes), 10% for violations of Party discipline (which includes those accused of factional activity) and 17% for being 'alien elements' or having lied about class background. Similarly in the 1933 *chistka*, in which 15% were expelled for personal degeneracy, 14% for violating Party discipline, 16% for political reasons, including concealing class background, and 18% for abuse of position.<sup>86</sup> According to Rigby's analysis of the 1933 membership screening,

... political considerations play a relatively small part in this sample of expulsions, however, and the great majority were removed either because they made unscrupulous use of their Party membership to secure personal benefits, were immoral or undisciplined in their personal lives or at their job, or simply failed to participate in party activities.<sup>87</sup>

Data for the 1935 purge (which occurred immediately after the Kirov assassination) reveals that the reasons for expulsions were similar to those in the pre-1934 membership screenings; more than 20% were expelled for petty crimes or 'moral turpitude', and most of the remainder for political passivity, 'degeneracy' or abuse of position.<sup>88</sup>

The information on the incidence of the *proverka* suggests that it was not a hysterical, political witchhunt, in which helpless rank and file Party members fell in droves for the slightest infraction. Rather, it seems that the *proverka* of 1935 was more careful, and less political, in that there is evidence of investigation and of a policy in which a consistent pattern of problems or violations was necessary for expulsion.<sup>89</sup>

Results for one city in the Smolensk region showed that only 18% of the members against whom charges had been brought were actually expelled, and less than one-third of those formally criticized at meetings received any form



of disciplinary treatment at all.<sup>90</sup> The records of the Smolensk City Party committee reveal that 7% were expelled for passivity, 21% for being petty criminals or degenerates, or corrupt; 28% for untrustworthiness, 22% for being 'class alien persons' who had hidden their class origins, and only 8% for political unreliability.<sup>91</sup> Undoubtedly there was a higher percentage of expulsions for political reasons in the 1937 purge owing to the hysteria engendered by the spy and 'wrecker' mania current at the time. Nevertheless, given the results of previous purges, especially that of 1935, there is no doubt that the reasons for the majority of purges were not political.

In 1937 the Party again instituted a systematic 'purging' process in order to improve the quality of its cadre. It appears that the bulk of the members who left the Party for any reason in the 1937-38 period were separated on the basis of the screening process involved in validating Party membership and were separated for reasons other than suspected political opposition. As in previous purges all Party members were required to prove that they were conducting themselves as good Communists, and to submit to the criticism of other Party members. Those who failed to meet the test were denied new Party cards and as a result *de facto* expelled from the Party.

In short, the vast majority of those whose Party cards were withdrawn both in the pre and post 1934 membership screenings were expelled not for association with any political opposition, but rather for being 'careerists', 'opportunists', ill-disciplined, 'degenerates', politically passive, 'politically illiterate', 'weak willed', and so on.<sup>92</sup>

In the years between the ending of the Cultural Revolution and 1937 a rather ossified and non-responsive bureaucratic tone had taken possession of the CPSU. It seems that in the early years of collectivization and planning, considerable authority to 'get things done' had to be given to local Party leaders. Further, given the shortage of politically loyal administrators, engineers and technicians, detailed economic and administrative decision-making had to be handled – or at least closely supervised – by local Party leaders. The incredibly rapid expansion of economic activities for which the Party was responsible in the early years of planning, as well as the immense problems inherent in collectivization, led to the hasty and often haphazard construction of a massive decision-making apparatus. On a day-to-day basis bureaucracy was largely unresponsive towards both the centre and the rank and file.<sup>93</sup> The tremendous increase in the Party's economic responsibilities, the massive shifts in population, the class warfare with the rich peasants, and the obsession with fulfilling the new economic plans all resulted in the Party's *political* role beginning to atrophy. Political education, mass political campaigns, and ideology in general, were increasingly neglected as economic administration became progressively important. With the Party leaders' metamorphosis into economic administrators, local Party administration often tended to manifest inertia, incompetence, clumsiness and sometimes arrogance. Whatever may have been the case after 1937, during the first decade of planning, the Party apparatus was far from a well-oiled, efficient, co-ordinated machine closely controlled and directed from the top.



In response to the dual problem of an ossifying bureaucracy the so-called 'democracy/anti-bureaucracy campaign' was launched by the Central Committee in February 1937. This campaign marked a partial return to the anti-bureaucratic mass radicalism of the Cultural Revolution of 1928-31.<sup>94</sup> Its goal was to mobilize the Party's rank and file against bureaucracy in order both to reduce the autonomy of local and middle leadership and make them more responsible to the day-to-day concerns of the rank and file, and the directives of the centre. Combined with this thrust was the attempt to reduce Party leaders' role in the details of economic and political administration and to turn such matters over to the newly educated working-class intelligentsia, and to restore the *political* leadership role to Party leaders, that is, leading mass campaigns, organizing, political education.<sup>95</sup> At this time, too, questions of expertise and competence provoked tensions between the older, non-technically educated Party leaders (who had achieved their positions on the basis of politics) and the young, 'red intelligentsia', mostly from working-class and peasant backgrounds who had recently completed their technical education.<sup>96</sup>

The 'democracy/anti-bureaucracy' campaign of February 1937 had many parallels with the 'Bombard the Headquarters' campaign initiated in China by Mao Tse-tung during 1966-67. Quite probably, together with the 1928-31 Soviet Cultural Revolution, this campaign was the precedent upon which the Chinese Party based itself (the events which took place in the Soviet Union in the 1930s had a profound influence on young Communists throughout the world at the time). That both the Chinese 'Bombard the Headquarters' campaign of 1966-67, which took place 17 years after the seizure of power and 11 years after the revolution entered its explicitly socialist phase, and the 'democracy/anti-bureaucracy campaign' of the Bolshevik Revolution, which took place 20 years after the seizure of power and nine years after the beginning of the second phase of the Revolution, occurred at the same point in the development of the two revolutions, provides strong evidence that both were in response to similar situations and were thus qualitatively similar phenomena. The results in both cases were the reduction in the autonomy of local regional officials and an increased responsiveness to day-to-day concerns of the people by the local Party.

The notion of 'Putting Politics in Command' was central to both campaigns. A large percentage of the Party's local officials — from above and below — were removed and many were rehabilitated in both campaigns. In the words of G. Arch Getty speaking of 'the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution':

While this movement was not as violent (and fatal) as the events in the USSR in the 1930s, the parallels are very strong. In both cases, the centre unleashed the rank and file against the established bureaucracy in the name of political purity, democracy and the rights of the Party rank and file.<sup>97</sup>



Getty himself, concluding his carefully documented and closely argued study, goes even further, arguing that the primary aspect of the totality of the events of the 1937-38 period was the undermining of the bureaucracy:

The Ezhovshchina . . . was not the result of a petrified bureaucracy stamping out dissent and annihilating the old radical revolutionaries. In fact, it may have been just the opposite. It is not inconsistent with the evidence to argue that the Ezhovshchina was rather a radical, even hysterical reaction to bureaucracy. The entrenched bureaucracy was destroyed from above and below in a wave of voluntarism, chaos, and even a kind of perverse revolutionary puritanism.<sup>98</sup>

The February 1937 plenum of the Central Committee, as part of the Party's anti-bureaucracy campaign, announced that there were to be secret ballot elections in the local Party organizations. There was considerable opposition both in the Central Committee and, not surprising, among local Party leaders, to such a departure from the traditional Party practice of open selection of leaders.<sup>99</sup> These elections were held in the spring of 1937, before the fabricated letters implicating the Soviet military leaders in a conspiracy to overthrow the government had been received, (see below) and before the 'spies' and 'wreckers' hysteria among the top leadership of the Party had peaked. As a result of these secret ballot elections about 50% of Party unit and regional first secretaries, as well as leadership committees, lost their positions; they were adjudged by the rank and file to be 'unsatisfactory' in their work. These secret ballots usually took place after long criticism meetings, at which the local leaders often suffered insulting criticism.<sup>100</sup>

Not until June-July did the 'democracy/anti-bureaucracy' campaign, as well as the process of 'purging' the Party, converge with the rising 'spy' and 'wrecker' fears, which began immediately after the Soviets received forged documents from the Nazi Gestapo, via the Czech secret police, implicating the Soviet military general staff in an alleged conspiracy to carry out a *coup d'état*. In the hysterical atmosphere that followed, in the summer of 1937, not only were the majority of the top military leaders tried and executed, but many other former oppositional figures, and those associated with them, were also arrested. Also at this time, the security police were, for the first time, given the authority to arrest Party members. Those moderates in Party leadership who had been resisting the anti-bureaucracy campaign, by stressing the importance of economic leadership, and complaining that the campaign was causing disruption, came under the suspicion of involvement in the alleged conspiracy to overthrow the government — especially by 'wrecking'.

Many of these moderates were or had been close to Bukharin and shared his scepticism about the mass campaigns and the Stakonovites, as well as towards the need for the purges and arrests of key economic administrators. They favoured, instead, more gradual and established paths towards industrialization. In the latter half of 1937 the purges and arrests — heavily



concentrated among the top leadership, but also occurring within the Party's middle and lower level leadership – were extended to those on the right of the Party, including former associates of right-opposition factions.<sup>101</sup> In the summer of 1937 the moderate leaning majority in the Central Committee was broken by large scale expulsion, arrests and executions, covered by sensationalist announcements of implication in plots with Trotsky and German and Japanese intelligence to overthrow the government, allegedly through spying, conspiring and above all 'wrecking'.

### **Traitor Mania and the Moscow Trials of 1936-38**

The period of increasing tolerance in Soviet history ended abruptly on 1 December 1934 when S.M. Kirov, the head of the Leningrad Party organization, and probably the second most influential Party leader in the country, was assassinated at the Leningrad Party headquarters by a discontented young Party member. The assassin, Nikolayev, had belonged to a circle of young left-wing Communists who had been studying the literature of revolutionary terrorism. Unhappy with the course of events in the Soviet Union, this left opposition circle looked for inspiration to Zinoviev, the former head of the Leningrad Party organization, and for many years a prominent spokesman for the left in the Party – although they had neither any direct nor indirect contact with Zinoviev.<sup>102</sup> The top Party leadership, including Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kagonovich, personally directed and participated in the interrogation of Nikolayev, since it was suspected that his organization was part of a much wider conspiracy.

Nikolayev, along with a number of his political associates, was tried and sentenced to death. Zinoviev, together with his long term close associate, Kamenev, was arrested and charged with 'moral complicity' in the assassination. In the hysterical atmosphere that was beginning to develop Zinoviev was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and Kamenev to five.<sup>103</sup>

Other extraordinary measures were immediately undertaken to guard against further assassinations (there was an attempt on Molotov) and other acts of violent disruption. Cases of counter-revolutionary crimes were transferred to military courts. The death sentence for terrorist acts was to be liberally utilized and immediately put into effect, as a deterrent to further such actions. Appeals against sentences for counter-revolutionary offences were no longer permitted.<sup>104</sup> In summer 1936, the Central Committee voted the political police (the NKVD) extraordinary powers for one year, to enable them to more effectively contain 'the enemies of the people'. This, in effect, suspended all judicial rights for those suspected of counter-revolutionary activities. The NKVD now had authorization to arrest and sentence, without trial or right of appeal, all non-Party members suspected of such activities. In the following year, the June Plenum of the Central Committee extended these extraordinary powers indefinitely.<sup>105</sup>

Until 1937, the regime in the labour re-education camps was, usually,



relatively liberal and humane. Political prisoners had a privileged status with many special rights denied to ordinary criminals. The work day during the winter was from four to six hours, and in summer ten. Generous pay was provided which allowed prisoners to send money to their families and to return home with money. Food and clothing was adequate and serious attempts were made to re-educate the prisoners.

In 1937 this privileged status ended. For the next few years the regime for political prisoners was harsher than that for common criminals. The corrective labour camps were transformed into hard labour camps, with the primary function of punishing suspected counter-revolutionaries while forcing them to aid the socialist transition by physical construction work, with little or no serious attempt at rehabilitation. Labour camp inmates were now treated as hardened 'enemies of the people' who deserved little mercy. Hard labour for ten, and sometime more, hours a day became the rule. Inadequate food, shelter and clothing, and often tyrannical authority, now became common; death from causes associated with overwork, exposure, malnourishment, disease, etc. now became a factor.<sup>106</sup>

For the first 20 years of the Revolution, in the words of Anna Louise Strong: 'the Soviet people had prided themselves on the absence in the gaols, not only of the torture used by the Nazis, but of even the third-degree as practised in the United States.'<sup>107</sup> The year 1937 also saw the introduction of torture as a permissible police technique. An instruction from the Party's General Secretary issued in January 1939 read:

The General Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) explains that the application of methods of physical pressure in NKVD practice is permissible from 1937 on in accordance with permission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). . . . It is known that all bourgeois intelligence services use methods of physical influence against the representatives of the socialist proletariat and that they use them in their most scandalous form. The question arises as to why the socialist intelligence service should be more humanitarian against the mad agents of the bourgeoisie, against the deadly enemies of the working class and the Kolkhoz workers. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) considers that physical pressure should still be used obligatorily, as an exception applicable to known and obstinate enemies of the people, as a method both justifiable and appropriate.<sup>108</sup>

Accelerating slowly over the latter half of 1936 and the first half of 1937, largely because of the increasingly tense international situation, the spy scare became hysterical and uncontrolled in June and July 1937, following the arrest and execution of the top military staff who had been implicated in the Gestapo's forged documents.<sup>109</sup> In Getty's words: 'The increased tension of the spy scare/war scare/vigilance campaign was in vivid contrast to the preceding events, which constituted a lull of nearly two years since the



death of Kirov.'<sup>110</sup> Concerning the period 1935-36 Getty argues that it would be: 'ridiculous to regard this period as one of rising hysteria or vigilance. With the exchange of Party documents, in fact, the vigilance theme had receded into the background.'

In late 1937 and early 1938, the NKVD acquired the power to arrest Party members who had not been subject to action by their Party units, that is, had not been expelled or denied their Party cards. Before this, Party members were immune from the summary actions of the NKVD. To quote Brzezinski:

The secret police (known then as the NKVD) had overreached itself, and was endangering the hitherto undisputed supremacy of the Party. The purge of the Party organizations, until then a function of the Party purging commissions and the control commissions, had passed into the hands of the police, which alone decided, frequently on the basis of sources of doubtful reliability, the scope and the timing of the arrests.

...

The arrests of local Party leaders by the secret police, without prior expulsion from the Party, became commonplace. Release of arrested relatives or friends through the intercession of the Party organization became more and more difficult. . . .<sup>111</sup>

This situation lasted only a few months, however, as there was a strong reaction from the rank and file of the Party.<sup>112</sup> This soon resulted in the reassertion of the Party's exclusive control over its own members, and a significant reduction in the authority of the security police.

Intimidation reached such a point that effective power was slipping from the hands of the Party officials into the hands of the police . . .

. . . the Party, including the top leadership became seriously concerned about the situation, and by early 1938 was determined to apply remedial measures of no mean consequence.

. . . by early 1938 some efforts to tone down the purge could be discerned. Trials and accusations began to fade into the background, as did efforts to glorify the secret police and Yezhov.<sup>113</sup>

. . . in 1938 the combined forces of the Party, relying on public resentment against the secret police, thwarted any disruptive developments emanating from the latter. Indeed, eyewitnesses tell of numerous arrests among the NKVD personnel.<sup>114</sup>

It appears that the numbers of those arrested by the NKVD who had not been expelled from the Party did not represent a large proportion of those separated from the Party. Expulsions remained commonplace even while the overall scope of the purge diminished. To quote Brzezinski:

Published statistics on expulsions and changes in leadership showed that, while the tempo of the purge diminished, it still took its toll



among the Party cadres. A good many of the expulsions, however, took place during the latter half of 1937 and early months of 1938.<sup>115</sup>

The most detailed and direct evidence, the records of the Smolensk Party organization which were seized by the invading Nazi armies in 1941 and captured from them by the US at the end of the War, indicates that the standard procedure was to formally expel Party members accused of counter-revolutionary activities. There is little support for the thesis that any significant number of Party members were executed who had not been expelled.<sup>116</sup>

The 'extraordinary' measures of the 1936-38 period primarily affected Party and ex-Party members, especially leading Party figures, as well as former leading figures in other political organizations. In the words of Brzezinski: 'The major effort of the purge was directed at the Communist Party itself.'<sup>117</sup> That the 'extraordinary' measures mainly affected the higher levels of the Party is confirmed by the analysis of T.H. Rigby:

... while the *chistka* of 1933-34 struck mostly at the rank and file, leaving the apparatus virtually untouched, and the 'verification' and exchange of party documents in 1935 affected particularly the lower functionaries, the *Ezhovshchina* was aimed primarily at the directing cadres and the intelligentsia, with the rank-and-file figuring now much more as accusers and informers than as victims.<sup>118</sup>

While the traitor mania began against the traditional 'leftist' factions in the Party (including the tendency with which Nikolayev's group was associated), in 1937 it came to include both the traditional right and the moderate economic leadership.

The arrests and executions — most of which occurred without public trials or even public announcements — of mostly expelled leading Party members focused mainly on older members who, at one point or another in their lives, had been associated with oppositional factions in the Party; former activists in the now defunct Menshevik, Social Revolutionary, Bundist, anarchist and Cadet organizations; as well as those in leadership positions who had been advanced in their careers by the various leading Bolsheviks tried in the three 'Great Purge Trials'. Refugee Communists from Germany, Poland, Hungary and elsewhere in the capitalist world, who at some point had ties to these figures, were also swept up in the process (many foreign Communists, of course, were linked at one point or another with Zinoviev or Bukharin, both of whom had been chairmen of the Communist International).<sup>119</sup>

Throughout 1936, thousands of Communists who had at one time or another been associated with various left factions in the Party, were expelled and arrested. Former activists of other parties were also arrested on suspicion of supporting counter-revolutionary activities. The wave of 'spy' and 'wrecker' mania that swept the country had millions enthusiastically



participating in the search for counter-revolutionaries and supporting their trials. In 1937, especially the eight months from May, saw the greatest intensity of arrests and executions. About ten times more people (almost all of whom were innocent) were arrested in 1937 than there had been in 1936.<sup>120</sup>

The events of these years were focused on three well publicized trials, known collectively in the West as the 'Moscow Trials' or the 'Great Purge Trials'. The first, held in August 1936, was the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev and 14 others (the principle leaders of the old left opposition) who were falsely charged with planning and instigating the Kirov assassination (no longer with just moral complicity), and with planning the assassination of other Bolshevik leaders including Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Zhdanov, in collaboration, it was alleged, with Leon Trotsky, then exiled in Mexico. The second, in January 1937, involved Radek, Piatokov and 15 others ('second level' leaders of the old left opposition) who were publicly tried for 'wrecking' and economic sabotage in collaboration, it was alleged, with the German and Japanese intelligence agencies; again Trotsky was implicated and charges made that these ex-Bolshevik leaders were also involved in the conspiracy to assassinate the current leadership.

In spring and summer 1937, the false charges of counter-revolutionary activities and treason were extended beyond those who had long been associated with the left-opposition (for example, associates of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, et al.) to those formerly associated with the right opposition. Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsy and many of their former followers and associates were now arrested, and in March 1938, Bukharin, Rykov and 19 others along with Henryk Yagoda, the former head of the NKVD (who had prepared the evidence for the first purge trial) figured in the third of these well publicized trials. Yagoda was charged with collaboration with German and Japanese intelligence agencies, and, in conspiracy with the others, of falsely accusing many honest revolutionaries of counter-revolutionary activities and thus being responsible for their wrongful execution. In addition to being charged with complicity in the same general conspiracy as the defendants of the two previous trials, Bukharin, Rykov et al. were also falsely accused of being involved in planning a *coup d'état* (also allegedly co-ordinated with German intelligence) with Marshal Tukhachevsky, the leading Soviet general who had been tried and shot in June 1937. Almost all of those tried in these three public trials were executed.<sup>121</sup>

In January 1938, the Central Committee criticized local Party organizations for exaggerated vigilance and excessive expulsions. The intensity of the purge then diminished. After the last of the 'Great Purge Trials', expulsions and arrests markedly decreased. Abuses were, in part, attributed to 'careerists trying to gain merit by throwing people out of the Party, trying to gain security for themselves through mass repressions against the rank and file members.'<sup>122</sup>

In December 1938, the campaign came to a complete halt. Most pending investigations for counter-revolutionary activities were dropped and the



suspects released. Yezhov was dismissed as the head of the NKVD and replaced by L.P. Beria. A number of leading NKVD officers were arrested and some executed for having extracted false confessions. Most regional heads of the security police were purged, and many were subject to criminal actions. Past abuses were widely criticized. Both Yagoda and Yezhov were denounced as enemies of the people. Numerous cases were reinvestigated and quite a few of the sentenced released; conditions in the labour camps were ameliorated.<sup>123</sup>

At the 18th Party Congress in March 1939, the events of the previous three years were criticized by Stalin, Molotov and Zhdanov as having been accompanied by 'grave mistakes' and pathological suspicion that had most adversely affected the Party's work. Zhdanov, who gave one of the main political reports at the Congress, reprimanded the local Party organizations for 'stupid excess of zeal', citing instance after instance of faked evidence and presumption of guilt by association. The resolution voted by the Congress summed up the purges as both unjust and ineffective. Party rules adopted at this Congress made new provisions for members' rights of appeal against expulsion, as well as banning the practice of mass purges of membership.<sup>124</sup> A new rule passed at the 18th Congress read:

When the question of the expulsion of a Party member or the reinstatement of an expelled member is discussed, the maximum caution and comradely consideration must be exercised and the grounds for the accusations brought against the Party member thoroughly investigated.<sup>125</sup>

There was much talk at the Congress of rehabilitating the unjustly condemned. Indeed, thousands were rehabilitated in 1939 and 1940, including many military commanders; many future military heroes of World War II were restored to their positions during these two years. To quote Brzezinski:

The Party organizations were exhorted to remember that admission of past mistakes 'does not diminish authority but, on the contrary, actually raises it', and were urged to give full and prompt consideration to appeals of expelled Party members. . . .

The reaction was indeed prompt, even if not entirely satisfactory. Reports from various Party organizations began again to pour in, giving detailed accounts of the process of readmission into the Party, and incidentally, again bearing witness to the scale of the purge. In Georgia, for instance, 485 or 840 appeals had already been considered, but some 1700 still remained on the books; in Kazakhstan 524 members were taken back out of 1,021 appealing; but 3,724 were yet to be processed, the Kiev region had 2,452 appeals still pending. . . . One of the major preoccupations of the Party conferences held that year was discussion of what measures would expedite the processing of the thousands of appeals from gradually more emboldened ex-Party workers. The Politburo, through the Central Committee, was



forced repeatedly to urge the Party organizations to accelerate the handling of appeals; and charges of inefficiency and laggardness became frequent.<sup>126</sup>

## **The Numbers of Those Affected**

Between December 1935 and December 1938, and November 1936 and March 1939, including 1937, when the 'Great Purge' was at its most intense, roughly 160,000 to 180,000 people left the CPSU (for any reason). This represented about 8% of total Party members, far fewer than those who were expelled in the purge of 1933.<sup>127</sup>

To quote T.H. Rigby, the leading Western expert on the membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

During 1937 when the bulk of the arrests appear to have occurred, the party membership declined by only 60,000. Since new recruits totalled less than 40,000, the number of current party members who were 'purged' during 1937 must have been under 100,000. Taking the whole period between the renewal of recruitment in November 1936 and the Eighteenth Congress in March 1939, the growth in total Party membership fell short of the number of candidates admitted by only about 180,000, and this appears to be the maximum number who could have been 'purged' during this period, not allowing for deaths of members from natural causes. . . .<sup>128</sup>

In 1937, at the height of the Great Purge in Moscow, 33,000 (13.4% of the total Moscow Oblast Party organization) left the Party; this compares with 133,000 in 1933 and 45,500 in 1935. These data are especially significant indicators of the effect of the Great Purge since the 1936-38 purge primarily affected older Bolsheviks and higher level cadres who were disproportionately located in the Moscow region.<sup>129</sup> In general, the higher the position in the Party organization, and the greater the seniority in the Party, the more likely one was to be expelled, arrested or executed.<sup>130</sup> For example, between 1937 and 1940 there was a 25% decline in the membership of the Leningrad Party organization of those who had joined the Party before the Revolution, but only an 11% decline in those who had joined between 1917 and 1932.<sup>131</sup>

The Great Purge reached ferocious proportions at the very top levels of Soviet society. With the exception of Stalin, all of Lenin's Politburo were executed, including Trotsky who was assassinated in Mexico in 1940. By the beginning of 1939, 110 of the 139 members and candidate members of the Central Committee of the Party elected at the 1934 Congress had been arrested, and 98 of them shot, and of the 1,966 delegates to the 1934 Party Congress, 1,108 had been arrested.<sup>132</sup>

The officer corps, especially top military leaders, were also hard hit by



the purges, arrests and executions. In June 1937, the top military commander, General Tukhachevsky and other leading military officials were tried secretly for allegedly plotting a *coup d'état* against the Party leadership, in collaboration with the other oppositional figures, Trotsky and the Germans. These innocent generals, in common with almost all the leading civilian oppositional figures, were shot. About 90% of all generals, including three of the five marshals, 80% of all colonels, 136 of the 199 division commanders, and all eight first rank admirals were arrested. Between 25% and 50% of all officers were arrested and several thousands were shot.<sup>133</sup>

The standard sentence for most of those arrested for counter-revolutionary activities in the 1936-38 period, however, was five to ten years hard labour.<sup>134</sup> On the basis of information about their relatives provided by 2,725 defectors who left the Soviet Union during World War II, Brzezinski analysed the sentences received by those arrested for political reasons throughout the 1930s. He found that death sentences represented about 10% of all sentences in both the 1930-35 and the 1936-40 period:

The rate of death sentences, in so far as the sample was concerned, remained approximately constant between the years 1930 and 1940: the first five years resulted in 47 death sentences out of 445 arrests; while in the second half-decade 52 were said to have been sentenced to death out of 471 arrests.<sup>135</sup>

Eyewitnesses to the events of 1937 tended to confirm Brzezinski's analysis. For example, Beck and Goden reported:

When the Yezhov period was at its height, sentences of less than five years forced labour were very rare. Normally they were for eight to ten years forced labour, but sentences of twenty-five years' forced labour or imprisonment were not uncommon. Death sentences were said to be frequent, but our impression is that they did not exceed ten per cent.<sup>136</sup>

Even if it is assumed that all those who ceased to be Party members between the end of 1935 and the end of 1938 were arrested for counter-revolutionary activities (a most unreasonable assumption given the wide range of motives for leaving the Party) 10% gives a maximum of about 18,000 for purged Party members who could have been executed in this period. It is clear, however, that of those who left the Party for any reason in the 1936-38 period not all were arrested. Taking into account natural attrition, resignations, (in 1933-34 one-third of the separations from the Party were resignations), expulsions for irresponsibility (the bulk of pre-1936 expulsions were for this reason) and expulsions on minor political charges, most probably less than half of the 180,000 were ever arrested. Thus, an approximate estimate of 10,000 (or less) executions of Party members for counter-revolutionary activities is almost certainly nearer the



truth than 18,000. If we assume that the number of non-Party members (including those expelled before November 1936, former cadres of other left parties such as the SRs, anarchists and Mensheviks, and prominent refugees from other countries) arrested for counter-revolutionary activities was roughly equal to those Party members expelled and/or arrested after November 1936, then the figure for those executed in the 1936-38 period would be about 20,000.

That a significant proportion of non-Party people were not killed during the Great Purge period is born witness to by a published analysis of all those born in 1906 which showed that the 1937 and 1938 Soviet death rate was not significantly higher than that for 1934 or 1935.<sup>137</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that Party members accused of counter-revolutionary activities were more likely to be sentenced to death than others, in so far as they would probably be considered as traitors. However, after January 1938, as the 'Great Purge' wound down and rehabilitation of Party members began, the fact that the number of those who applied for readmission was of the same order as those expelled over the 1936-38 period indicates that few Party members had been shot. As the figures reported by Brzezinski make clear (2,500 appeals from Georgia, about 3,000 from Kiev, 4,800 from Kazakhstan) the total number of appeals during 1939-40 approximate to the number expelled from November 1936 to March 1939 (Georgia had about 2% of the population of the country, Kazakhstan about 3%). Thus, those who had been shot or who had died in labour camps, could be only a small fraction of the total expelled.<sup>138</sup> \* Apparently it was the very top leaders of the Party and Army who were executed, and, relatively rarely, the rank and file.

The true number of those falsely accused of counter-revolutionary activities who were executed in the 1936-38 period, is probably between 20,000 and 100,000.† Both George Kennan and Jerry Hough<sup>139</sup> concur

\* It should also be noted that the substantial majority of those expelled from the Party who applied for readmission, were readmitted. For example, in the year 1938, 85% of those in Moscow who appealed against their expulsion were reinstated, 57% of those in Kiev, and 60% of those in Belorussia.<sup>140</sup>

† The most commonly cited figures in the unsympathetic scholarly literature for those separated from the Party (with or without formal expulsion hearings) during the Great Purge of 1936-38 is about 850,000.<sup>141</sup> Those who cite this estimate usually go on to guess that about half were executed.<sup>142</sup> Thus the figure of about half a million killed during the Great Purge of the late 1930s has gained considerable credibility even in the more scholarly and somewhat less hysterical Western circles. A careful examination of Party membership figures, as well as statistics on the probability of different penalties for those sentenced for counter-revolutionary activities in the 1936-38 period, however, reveals a very different picture. Both Rigby's and Unger's<sup>143</sup> more careful analysis reveals that the number of separations during the Great Purge was only a fraction of the 850,000 figure claimed by Brzezinski. To quote Unger:

The estimate of approximately 850,000 purged Party members given by



that the likely number of executions was closer to the former rather than the latter figure. During the French Revolution about 17,000 people were executed for counter-revolutionary activity in the 1793-94 period of Jacobin Terror,<sup>147</sup> representing about .065% of the French population at the time. If the figure of 20,000 for the 1936-38 Red Terror is accurate, this represents .01% of the Soviet population; if the 100,000 figure is correct, this represents .05%. Any reasonable estimate of executions in the 1936-38 period of the Great Purge indicates that, in relative terms, at most they did not exceed those of the Jacobin Terror, and were probably fewer. Clearly, the popular conception of the bloodiness of the Great Purge is a gross exaggeration cultivated by those concerned to discredit developments in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and since, as well as the contemporary revolutionary process in other countries.

The proportion of the population killed in these two 'Red Terrors', the Jacobin and the Great Purge of the Bolsheviks, pales in comparison with the 'White Terrors' perpetrated by the propertied class either to prevent

† continued/

Brzezinski for the three years 1936-38 is based on an inaccurate reading of the Party membership figures. . . the membership figures cited by Brzezinski as relating to the end of 1935 (2,358,714) and the end of 1938 (1,920,000) relate in fact to the beginning of 1935 and 1938 respectively, and are therefore irrelevant to an estimate of the Great Purge. The true figures at the end of 1935 and 1938 were respectively 2,076,842 and 2,306,973, showing not a loss, but an increase of 230,131 members. Thus if Brzezinski's estimate of 410,000 admissions - from the resumption of recruitment at the end of 1936 until the end of 1938 - is correct, the total of purged party members in the three years 1936-38 would be not approximately 850,000 but 410,000 less 230,131, or approximately 180,000 members, expulsions during the two years 1937-38 could not have exceeded 85,000.<sup>144</sup>

Even if the 850,000 figure were valid, applying the 10% execution-to-arrest ratio to the half or so of those separated from the Party for any reason, gives a figure of about 50,000 executions, *one-tenth* of the figure suggested by many sources.

Rigby suggests that many of those purged in the early 1930s were perhaps victims of the extraordinary measures of the 1936-38 period (although there is no evidence that this was the case): 'Of course, vast numbers of people who were not members of the Party also fell victim to the *Ezhovshchina*, including a large (but unknown) proportion of the million and a half communists who had been expelled from the Party before the mass arrests began. . . . That it is unlikely that very many of the ex-Party members were executed for counter-revolutionary activities (or even that very many were even investigated or arrested) is strongly suggested by Rigby himself when he cites the reasons for the expulsions of the early 1930s. (These earlier expulsions were mostly of newly recruited young workers and peasants who turned out to be non-activists, irresponsible, drunkards, etc., large numbers of whom were carelessly recruited principally on the basis of their class position.) To quote Rigby '... most of the victims in 1933-34 were simply apolitical men and women accused of exploiting their party membership for personal ends. . . .'<sup>145</sup> 'The *chistka* [of 1933-34] took its main toll among workers and peasants who entered the party during the mass recruitment drive of the collectivization and first Five Year Plan era and scarcely touched those older Party members from which most of the Party's cadres were drawn.'<sup>146</sup>



social revolutions or to take vengeance on those who tried and failed (for example, El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Germany, Argentina).

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s numerous people were arrested and sent to the labour re-education camps which, after their transformation in 1937, became penal colonies, functioning to aid the construction of the virgin regions. The number of people so confined has been subject to wild speculation in the extensive anti-Soviet literature that developed with the onset of the cold war. Estimates in these sources for those interned in 1938 range from 2 to 12 million; many such estimates are based on the self-interested speculation and rumours of those once assigned to the camps. Others are based on such factors as alleged discrepancies in Soviet census data, where it is assumed that apparent discrepancies between different grand totals are equal to the number of people in (or on the pay-roll of) the labour camps, discrepancies between projections of populations assuming a particular 'normal' birth and death rate and the number of people actually reported in a census; the number of newspaper subscriptions (multiplied by the alleged number of people who read a paper) etc. These highly speculative estimates have been subject to a careful review and criticism by British Soviet expert, S.G. Wheatcroft (1981). After examining the statistical discrepancies, population projections, etc. on which many estimates in the Western literature are based, Wheatcroft argues as follows about the *logical* maximum of the number that could have been in the labour camps in 1939:

The employment and census data have indicated the impossibility of fitting more than three or four million forced concentration camp labourers into the labour force without a large number of them being included in other registered categories. But it has generally been accepted that only a small number of forced labourers could be included within the standard registered categories because the information available about employment within these categories would not allow a large number to be fitted in. This points to the conclusion that some four to five million is the maximum number of concentration camp labourers who could have existed in 1939. This order of magnitude is quite compatible with data on disenfranchised populations. . . . It is however considerably lower than the order of magnitude proposed by most former camp inmates and many former officials who must be assumed to be offering exaggerated figures. The one former camp inmate who has access to local archival data also appears to indicate a relatively low figure. The available quantitative data on Party membership turnover and the turnover amongst senior state officials also indicate that the quantitative significance of the 1937-38 purge has also generally been exaggerated.<sup>148</sup>

Wheatcroft affords most credibility to estimated numbers in the labour camps during 1937-39 based on the number of those disenfranchised for counter-revolutionary activities, as well as the number of camp administrations



(a public statistic) multiplied by the average number of those confined in a single camp. In 1938 one of the 38 labour camp clusters, Vorkuta, was known to have 15,000 people under detention. To quote Wheatcroft, 'Vorkuta was certainly one of the better known camps, and there is no indication that it was smaller than average'. Assuming the Vorkuta population to be typical gives an estimate of less than 600,000 for the total of those confined in 1938.<sup>149</sup>

Estimates of those confined in 1937-38 based on the number of people officially disenfranchised for counter-revolutionary activities usually assume (unreasonably) that most of these were sent to labour camps and often that some who were sent to labour camps did not receive the formality of disenfranchisement (not such a reasonable assumption).<sup>150</sup> This latter assumption allows them to augment the number of expulsions to guess the number in labour camps. Wheatcroft, however, points out (p. 289) that checking voting registers against the number of people who actually voted reveals too minimal a discrepancy to account for any great number having been assigned to labour camps without disenfranchisement. In 1937 there were about 3.3 million disenfranchised persons in the Soviet Union.

Throughout most of their history the Soviets have practised a wide range of measures against opponents — from public criticism, disenfranchisement, and compulsory labour at ones normal workplace supervised by fellow workers, together with required study; to exile without confinement, assignment to labour re-education centres, imprisonment, and execution. According to Wheatcroft:

The category of forced labour without confinement had existed from the 1920s. By the mid-1930s about half of all those sentenced to forced labour served this sentence without confinement, generally at their normal place of work. These sentences were normally for periods of up to six months or in some cases a year. Up to 25% of the normal pay was deducted from wages.<sup>151</sup>

Exile without confinement was a standard sentence for peasants arrested in connection with the collectivization campaigns. They were also disenfranchised for the duration of their exile; thus, it can be assumed that they account for many of those disenfranchised in the latter half of the 1930s.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, assuming that a significant number of the disenfranchised were neither subject to forced labour nor exile indicates the maximum proportion of those disenfranchised that could have been in labour camps in 1937-38 is probably around 25%, or less than a million. The coincidence of the figures based on known information about the Vorkuta administration and the number of camp administrations, together with a reasonable ratio applied to the disenfranchisement data gives great credibility to an estimate of roughly one million people working in the labour camps in 1937-38, or about .5% of the Soviet population.

For a sense of the significance of this figure it can be pointed out that in



1978, out of a total US Black population of 23 million, about 200,000 (roughly 1%) were incarcerated.

Brzezinski's analysis of the sample of the 2,725 Soviet emigrés' relatives who were sentenced to labour camps over the course of the 1930s revealed that about 25% of them died in the labour camps. Assuming an average sentence of about eight years in the latter 1930s, this suggests an annual mortality rate of 3%.<sup>153</sup> In order to comprehend the significance of this latter figure it must be compared with the mortality rate in US prisons. In fact, 3% was approximately the mortality rate in Southern State penitentiaries in the US, at least throughout the early 1970s. One of the most thorough studies of health and mortality in a US Southern prison found that, in 1972, the death rate in the Tennessee State Penitentiary was 2.0 per 100, and in the Fiscal Year 1972-73, 2.2 per 100.<sup>154</sup>

The mortality rate of 3 per 100 in the Soviet labour camps of the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s should also be compared to the mortality rate for the Soviet population as a whole. Leaving aside the high mortality rate for Soviet soldiers during the 1941-45 period, it is noted that the death rate in the labour camps was the same as the mortality rate in the Czarist empire before World War I. While in 1913 the Russian mortality rate was 2.9 per 100, in 1940 it was 1.8 per 100, and in 1950 1.0 per 100.<sup>155</sup> Thus, while conditions either in US penitentiaries, in the Czarist empire or Siberian labour camps were comfortable, it must be concluded that the 3% mortality rate in Soviet labour camps amounted to far less than a death sentence (as is often assumed by anti-Communists in the West.)

Discussions in the West of the events of the 1930s in the USSR are very much a product of the Cold War. Even though dealing with events of a half century ago, they serve to discredit future possibilities of socialist revolution in other countries, which is why the issue continues to receive such attention. If 'millions died as a result of brutal Bolshevik methods' in the 1930s, then however exceptional the conditions of that decade, or that no executions for political reasons have occurred for a generation in the USSR, or that in many other socialist revolutions far fewer people died, it is still considered justifiable to oppose socialist revolution, and instead to support military dictatorships that systematically massacre their own people in, for example, Indonesia, El Salvador, Chile, Guatemala or Uruguay.

Not only wild exaggeration, but failure to apply a materialist analysis is characteristic of the NATO intellectuals, who are rewarded with grants, publications, high positions and personal support in proportion to the outrageousness of the figures they generate. It is true that the rural civil war and famine in the USSR in the early 1930s caused much misery, and that thousands of innocent people were executed or otherwise abused in the 1936-38 period. But Western analysis of these events is rarely presented in other than self-serving anti-Communist terms of 'Stalin's power hunger', 'the impossibility of the socialist project' or even simple sadism. Such standards of scholarship would not be acceptable for the study of the history of repression in the US, where the need to win the Revolutionary or Civil



War is argued and the consequent suspension of the Bill of Rights, and the forcible relocation of Loyalists excused if not justified; similarly, the need to mobilize during World Wars I and II is seen as a mitigating factor in 'over-reactions', such as the internment of the Japanese. The dual standards of scholarship conveniently ignore the serious world crisis within which the Soviet leadership was acting in the 1930s, together with the threat of domestic, rural upheavals, and the absolute imperative of industrializing and feeding the people, aside from the fact that they were attempting to pursue an historically unprecedented course.

## **The Politics of the Executions: 1936-38**

A study of 109 prominent 'Old Bolsheviks' (that is, who had joined the Party before 1917) found that 50% (38) of the 76 alive in the mid-1930s were executed for counter-revolutionary activities, in the 1936-38 period.<sup>156</sup> In 1939 about 5,000 members who had joined the Party before 1917 (when there were about 20,000-25,000 members) still remained. Such Old Bolsheviks, in fact, represented 20% of the delegates to the 1939 Party Congress, and about 30% of the Central Committee elected in 1939 were Old Bolsheviks.<sup>157</sup> Eighty-one percent of the 1934 Central Committee who were executed for treason were Old Bolsheviks, 85% of all members of the 1934 Central Committee were executed.<sup>158</sup> In summary, although the executions took a heavy toll of Old Bolsheviks during the traitor mania period between May 1937 and March 1938, this group by no means was totally decimated, neither did the decimation of top leadership ranks fall upon them disproportionately; so many Old Bolsheviks were executed because so many of them comprised the top leadership.

The study of the 76 prominent Old Bolsheviks found no significant correlation between age, sex, time in the Party, social origin, pre-Bolshevik Party membership, nationality, and education and the probability of execution for treason in 1937-38. Apart from being slightly younger (by two years) and a little better educated, the 38 who were executed closely resembled the 38 who survived in all these characteristics. There were, however, strong correlations between career patterns associated with leading opposition figures and the probability of execution for treason. Of the 76 Old Bolsheviks still living in 1936, 21 had been leaders of various past factions (the Left Communists of 1918, the Democratic Centralists of 1921, the Workers' Opposition of 1921, the Trotskyists of 1923-27, or the United Opposition of 1926-27) and 19 of these (50% of the total 38) were executed.<sup>160</sup> Ten per cent of the victims (4) had a personal connection with Trotsky in the 1920s while 71% (27) had personally associated with Bukharin, Rykov or Tomsky in the 1930s. Only 18% of the 38 Old Bolsheviks who survived the 1937-38 period had either personal connections with any of these four persons, or any connection with the opposition factions of the 1918-1927 period.<sup>161</sup> It might also be noted that Soviet ambassadors to



fascist and fascist associated countries ran a high risk of execution, while those to other countries very often survived: Soviet ambassadors to Germany, Latvia, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Spain and Romania were executed for treason; while ambassadors to France, the UK, the US, Sweden and Czechoslovakia were not.<sup>162</sup> These strong statistical associations, combined with the lack of significant correlations for other background factors, substantially support the notion that executions for treason were, in fact, executed on false charges<sup>163</sup> of economic sabotage ('wrecking'), as were that is, those whose past or present aroused suspicion tended to be falsely accused of treason.

Involvement in the military or economic administration was another major factor for potential arrest and execution for treason in 1936-38. Of the 76 Old Bolsheviks studied, it was found that all of those whose occupations were primarily connected with economics were executed for treason, while most of the educators, lawyers, doctors, scientists and other non-economic professionals survived. Officials in the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, Gosplan and the State Bank especially, were likely to be arrested and executed on false charges<sup>163</sup> of economic sabotage ('wrecking'), as were the moderate Central Committee majority. Their arrests seemed to be the outcome of their opposition to (or lack of enthusiasm for) the fairly leftist economic policies being implemented, as well as to the anti-bureaucratic/democracy campaign. The *Ezhovshchina*, or Red Terror, of 1937, in fact, eliminated most of those who had been the targets of radical activists over the previous decade.

It seems that the broadening of the charges of treason away from the traditional Trotsky-Zinoviev left opposition (totally discredited and removed from any position of influence since 1928) towards the right opposition (Bukharin, et al.) which, until 1937, retained some influence, with a position close to a very substantial section of Party leaders, manifested a defeat of the moderates and a victory for the left. As the statistics on Old Bolshevik victims show, the vast majority of those executed were associated with Bukharin, Rykov, Tomskey, et al., rather than with Trotsky or Zinoviev.<sup>164</sup> In support of the thesis that, however brutal and paranoid the executions of the 1937-38 period, they manifested a victory of the left over the right, is the fact that all the 1934 Central Committee members re-elected to the 1939 Central Committee were from the left of the Party, and none were from the right. It should, however, be noted that a number of prominent radicals and former activists in the 1928-31 Cultural Revolution campaign also perished in the hysteria of 1937-38.<sup>165</sup>

The September 1936 replacement of Yagoda by Yezhov (a career Party apparatus man associated with the more radical Party activists sympathetic to the policies of the Cultural Revolution of 1928-31) as head of state security indicated a definite move to the left in Party policy in the second half of 1936. In autumn 1936, the leadership of the state security police had been thoroughly purged of moderate career security apparatus personnel and replaced by more radical career Party apparatus people. The new Yezhov



leadership of the security police proceeded to actively investigate the Party's moderate leaders (for example, Bukharin, Rykov) who had been vindicated of any involvement in plots against the Party's leadership in the summer of 1936, and the top leadership (mostly moderates) of the economic ministries and planning agencies. In January 1937, Yezhov successfully brought Piatakov, the Commissar for Heavy Industry, to trial for 'wrecking' and sabotage, as well as having Bukharin and Rykov relieved of their posts and arrested on charges of treason. While the first 'Great Purge Trial', of August 1936, focused on attempts on the life of Soviet leaders, the two trials held when Yezhov was head of the security police stressed 'wrecking' and sabotage in a refocused attack on the moderate economic leadership and the Party's right wing. Among other things, Yagoda himself was charged with the equivalent of 'wrecking' for having sabotaged investigations of the Party's economic leadership and the right wing in the name of stability and moderation; in fact, the policy of the moderate majority of the Central Committee.

## **Causes and Effects**

The 1936-38 arrests, imprisonments and executions of Party, military and other leaders of Soviet society, in contrast to the purge and the demolition of leaders, appear to have been a manifestation of collective paranoia, reinforced by opportunists and agents provocateurs, and with little or no basis in any real conspiracies, sabotage or collaboration with foreign agents. The cadres expelled, imprisoned and shot during this period were mostly good Communists, essentially loyal to Soviet institutions.

During 1955-56, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union conducted an investigation of the actions taken against Party leaders in the late 1930s. To quote the Secretary General of the CPSU's report to the 20th Party Congress:

The Commission has become acquainted with a large quantity of materials in the NKVD archives and with other documents and has established many facts pertaining to the fabrication of cases against Communists, to false accusations, to glaring abuses of socialist legality — which resulted in the death of innocent people. It became apparent that many Party, Soviet and economic activists who were branded in 1937-38 as 'enemies' were actually never enemies, spies, wreckers, etc., but were always honest Communists; they were only so stigmatized, and often, no longer able to bear barbaric tortures, they charged themselves (at the order of the investigative judges — falsifiers) with all kinds of grave and unlikely crimes. . . .

Stalin put the Party and the NKVD up to the use of mass terror when the exploiting classes had been liquidated in our country and when



there were no serious reasons for the use of extraordinary mass terror.

This terror was actually directed not at the remnants of the defeated exploiting classes but against the honest workers of the Party and of the Soviet state; against them were made lying, slanderous and absurd accusations concerning 'two-facedness', 'espionage', 'sabotage', preparation of fictitious 'plots', etc.<sup>166</sup>

The charges against those purged and executed in the late 1930s were largely without foundation, nevertheless, the events of this period are eminently understandable in terms of the social forces operating on Soviet socialism at the time. The imminent threat of a co-ordinated Nazi-Japanese invasion of the USSR (which was without allies, either socialist or reliable capitalist) in the 1937-38 period was determinant. This overwhelming factor, given the assassination and attempted assassination of Soviet leaders, the overseas activities of emigrés (including members of the left opposition of the Bolsheviks themselves, such as Trotsky), the recent strains of collectivization, famine, rapid industrialization, and the provocative role of German and Japanese intelligence, together produced the paranoia of the late 1930s.

In January 1933 Hitler became Chancellor of Germany (this did not at first alarm the Soviets, as they then regarded him simply as a transparent instrument of capital, who would facilitate the imminent German revolution). In May 1933 the new Nazi government dissolved the powerful German trade unions and working-class political parties without resistance (outside the USSR the German Communist Party was the biggest in the world). In August 1934, after the death of von Hindenberg, Hitler assumed the office of President, and the armed services were now sworn to a personal oath of loyalty to him. In 1934 a non-aggression pact, signed between Poland and Germany, was followed by a general reconciliation between the two countries, manifested in a number of cultural and economic agreements. In 1935, Poland refused to join in a mutual defence treaty with Czechoslovakia, France and the USSR against potential German aggression. After 1935 the Polish military dictatorship became increasingly fascist oriented and vehemently anti-Communist, a policy rewarded by the Germans who granted Poland a piece of Czechoslovakia after they had conquered it in October 1938. In March 1935 Germany introduced general military conscription. The reassertion of German military might, the German left's failure to resist Hitler, and Germany's strident anti-Communism and anti-Slavic racism now aroused considerable concern in the USSR. In 1935 the 7th Congress of the Communist International radically modified its analysis and strategy to target fascism as the greatest danger in the world.

In March 1936, the German Army occupied the Rhineland, which the Versailles Treaty in 1919 had declared as a demilitarized zone. In May 1936, the Italians completed their conquest of Ethiopia (an aggressive action that, in spite of much public condemnation, evoked no effective response from the Western powers). In July 1936 the Spanish Army, in collaboration with the local fascists, rebelled against the centre-left Republican government and was



recognized by Italy and Germany, who soon sent troops, in addition to military supplies, to aid Franco. Also in summer 1936 the NKVD was granted extraordinary powers. The first 'Purge Trial' was held in August. Although the Soviets went to aid the embattled Spanish Republic (the Western capitalist powers declared their neutrality) after a bitter three-year civil war the Communist-aided Spanish Republic was destroyed. In November 1936 the Anti-Comintern Pact, signed by Nazi Germany and Japan, pledged the two countries (which flanked the Western and Eastern borders of the USSR) to co-operate against their mutual opponent. This raised the imminent threat of a co-ordinated attack on the USSR by the world's two most aggressive powers. The Pact was joined by Italy in January 1937 and by Spain in 1939. In July 1937 Japanese troops invaded the northern provinces of China (adjacent to the Soviet protectorate of Mongolia) and continued to expand the territory under their control until 1945. In 1939, massive border battles were, in fact, fought between the Japanese and Soviet armies along the Manchurian border.

In November 1937 (the month of the second 'Purge Trial') the Nazis declared their intention to conquer additional 'living space' for German settlement (*Lebensraum*) beyond that already occupied by German speaking peoples. Clearly, that *Lebensraum* was to be found in the East (Poland and the USSR). In March 1938 (the month that saw the last of the three 'Purge Trials') Austria was annexed to the Reich. In April 1938, after months of instability, the French Popular Front government collapsed, to be replaced by a rightist government. By early 1938 it was clear that the Spanish Republic was losing the Civil War. In September 1938 the French and English signed a non-aggression pact (the notorious 'Munich Pact') with Germany, that recognized the Nazi's right to annex much of Czechoslovakia. In October 1938 Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Germans. On 22 June 1941 the German Army invaded the Soviet Union and was in the suburbs of Moscow by November 1941.

It should be remembered that the charges against top Party leaders and Soviet generals who were tried and executed in the August 1936-March 1938 period were linked by the (false) accusation of involvement with Japanese and German intelligence services in order to secure the destruction of the Socialist system in the USSR by preparing the ground for a co-ordinated Japanese-German invasion. Given the USSR's 1918-20 experience of foreign invasions (including those of Germany and Japan), the seriously threatening anti-Comintern Pact between Japan and Germany in 1936, and the increased collusion of Britain, Poland and France in the aggressive policies of Germany and Italy and in the 1935-38 period, not surprisingly an atmosphere of paranoia, focusing on spy and sabotage mania, was generated in the USSR during 1936-38.

Exacerbating the 'Great Paranoia', as well as targeting many specific victims, were the disruptive actions of German and Japanese intelligence services who planted false stories that leading Soviets were working for them (much as the CIA did later in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary in the



1948-53 period).<sup>167</sup> The most notorious instance of the operation of German intelligence was their clever forgery and 'leaking' of documents allegedly indicating that General Tukhachevski (the top Soviet military commander, shot in June 1937 accused of plotting a military coup in collaboration with Germany) was working for them. Hitler himself wrote a note on the forged Tukhachevski letter and it was arranged for it to be stolen by Czech intelligence agents during a fire (deliberately set for the purpose) and then passed on to the Soviets. Czech leaders passed on stories to the Soviets that had been planted by Germany, alleging negotiations between Hitler and a number of Soviet leaders (including Rykov and Tukhachevski) to set up a pro-German government in the USSR. This fabrication had a degree of credibility, since many top German and Soviet generals knew each other personally from the 1920s when the Soviets allowed the German Army to train secretly in the USSR in return for German industrial and military goods.<sup>168</sup> These disruptive actions, as had been intended, succeeded in devastating the top levels of the Soviet officer corps.

One major effect of the events of the 1936-38 period was the loss of many good, and creative, cadres. Thus, in the short term, weakening Soviet society (manifested, for example, in the embarrassment of the Finnish War in winter 1940) and the rapid promotion of a new generation of 'red' intelligentsia, largely drawn from the working class, to the leading positions of Soviet society.

To quote the report to the 20th Party Congress of the General Secretary of the CPSU: 'There is, however, no doubt that our march forward towards socialism and towards the preparation of the country's defence would have been much more successful were it not for the tremendous loss of cadre suffered as a result of the baseless and false mass repressions in 1937-38.'<sup>169</sup>

But, as Roy Medvedev has argued:

Hundreds of thousands of officials had to be pushed up from below. Tens of thousands of Stakhanovite workers became factory directors. Ordinary soldiers became platoon and company commanders, company commanders were placed in charge of battalions and regiments, battalion and regimental commanders rose to command divisions and entire armies. Many rank and file scientists took over laboratories and big institutes.<sup>168</sup>

The records of the Smolensk Party organization captured by the German Army and then seized by the US Army at the end of the Second World War illustrate this phenomena in the Smolensk region.<sup>170</sup> \*

\* In winter 1937 the Party's General Secretary argued that the Party needed more 'simple people', and fewer people who had 'mastered Marxism-Leninism'. Arguing against those that maintained that the Party should recruit only people with a high level



To quote Isaac Deutscher:

In the five years from 1933 to 1938 about a million administrators, technicians, economists, and men of other professions had graduated from the high schools, an enormous number for a country whose educated classes had previously formed a very thin layer of society. This was the new intelligentsia whose ranks filled the purged and emptied offices. Its members . . . were either hostile to the men of the old guard or indifferent to their fate. They threw themselves into their work with a zeal and enthusiasm undimmed by recent events.<sup>174</sup>

The purging of innocent Soviet leaders, and the execution of so many greatly weakened Soviet leadership, nevertheless, some observers, such as Roy Medvedev, have pointed out that the paranoid hysteria of these years had the inadvertent consequence of facilitating the development of a high level of national solidarity, a solidarity, Medvedev argues, symbolized in the 'cult of personality' around Stalin.

In the thirties, Stalin's cult was strongest among workers, especially in the Party stratum of the working class, and also among the new young intelligentsia, particularly those of worker and peasant origin. It was also strong in the Party and state *apparatus*, especially in the *apparatus* that took shape after the repression of 1936-38.<sup>175</sup>

...

Throughout the period of his one man rule [Stalin] was popular. The longer this tyrant ruled the USSR . . . the greater seems to have been the dedication to him, even the love, of the majority of people. These sentiments reached their peak in the last years of his life. When he died in March, 1953, the grief of hundreds of millions, both in the Soviet Union and around the world, was quite sincere.<sup>176</sup>

of theoretical understanding he stated, 'Were we to take this road, we would leave in the Party only intellectuals and learned people. Who needs such a Party?'<sup>171</sup> To quote Schapiro:

'Since the purges of the '30s made such considerable inroads upon the older Bolsheviks, among whom the greater proportion of members of middle class origin were to be found, it may safely be asserted the predominance among the elite of those who came from the working class, or to a lesser extent the peasants, continued to grow after 1938.'<sup>172</sup>

'The victory of Stalin over his opponents in the party leadership had resulted in the elimination of almost all those of middle-class origin who had once formed the great majority of party leaders. All the "Old Stalinists", with the exception of Molotov, were of working class or peasant origin. This humble origin was less evident among the "Neo-Stalinists": both Malenkov and Zhdanov, for example, were of middle-class background, and so probably was Beria. But if the top leadership of the party alone be looked at, it was true to say that Stalin's victory had been ensured by men of those social classes in the name of which the Revolution had been made.'<sup>173</sup>



Just as periods of repression in other societies and at other times have radically increased national unity and generated national enthusiasm, so, apparently, this was the case in the USSR in the 1936-38 period. In US history, the measures against Loyalists during the Revolutionary War, Confederate sympathizers during the Civil War, and Socialists and Anarchists during and immediately after World War I, the internment of the Japanese Americans, the suppression of American Nazis during World War II and of the Communist Party in the late 1940s and early 1950s, were each accompanied by a unifying of the national will and the generation of popular enthusiasm behind the country's leadership. The projection of hostility against internal enemies, real or illusory, commonly has the effect of unifying a people. The paranoid campaign waged in the Soviet Union against spies and saboteurs appears to have generated a higher level of enthusiasm and support for the Party's leadership than had existed previously.

It must be noted that the strength of the 'cult of personality' by no means indicated that no major differences of opinion existed at the centre of Soviet society, or that Stalin had absolute personal power. The 'cult of personality' served the vital social function of symbolizing the unity and solidarity of Soviet society, a unity and solidarity essential in the 1930s and 1940s, and that could best be quickly created by personalizing it in the form of the celebration of a single individual 'father figure' who was portrayed in a Christ-like fashion as omniscient and benevolent. The cult of Stalin, in fact, took on many of the characteristics of the Russian Orthodox religion, that was the easiest route for the Party to follow in order to secure legitimacy among peasants and ex-peasants. Beneath the facade of monolithic unity and wisdom, however, major debates and factional disputes continued. Whichever idea or faction won was then presented to the people as the personal decision of the 'all-wise' Stalin, in order more effectively to mobilize the people behind it. To quote Getty:

The 'cult of personality' which developed around Stalin after 1929 (and around Mao in the 1960s) had many purposes. . . . It served as a kind of rallying point for much of a population which was used to a system in which one man ruled for life. More importantly, however, the tendency to attribute all things to the 'wise leadership of Comrade Stalin' served to hide inner-Party disputes from the public eye. The oppositional struggles of 1921-1929 had been public disagreements which had nearly torn the Party apart several times. That was not to be allowed in the 1930s. Even though radicals hated moderates and there were serious disagreements about everything from MTS political departments to economic planning, Stalin's cult of personality managed to hide, but not resolve, the splits until 1937.<sup>177</sup>

....

Policy disputes and disagreements were hidden behind the iron unity facade of Stalin's leadership. All policy initiatives were customarily attributed to the 'great teacher'. . . . It would be naive to assume, as



many have done, that Stalin controlled and initiated everything and that his lieutenants simply mechanically carried out his directives on everything from hog breeding to transport. . . . Left and right were still there (and, of course, always would be), but were simply not to be allowed to divide the Party as they did in the 1920s.<sup>178</sup>

To paraphrase a wise philosopher, if Stalin had not existed, he would have had to be invented. The Stalin cult of personality was invented to fulfil the need for an apparently monolithic leadership and charismatic inspiration in a period of crisis and rapid transformation of institutions and values. A similar process is common to all societies under similar conditions. The more acute the crisis, the more rapid the transformation, the more intense is the cult of the leader, for example, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Churchill, Cromwell, Napoleon, Castro, Mao Tse-tung, Khoumieni, Attaturk, Hitler, Mussolini, and so on. The personality cults that developed around these top leaders never meant that the struggles of different interests and the conflicting social forces operating behind the scenes were suspended in favour of the arbitrary will of an omnipotent individual.

A number of highly critical Marxists have summed up the overall results of the politically repressive 1928-39 period of Soviet history as positive. To quote Isaac Deutscher:

The nation has, nevertheless, advanced far in most fields of its existence. Its material apparatus of production, which in about 1930 was still inferior to that of any medium-sized European nation, has so greatly and so rapidly expanded that Russia is now the first industrial power in Europe and the second in the world. Within little more than one decade the number of her cities and towns doubled; and her urban population grew by thirty millions. The number of schools of all grades has very impressively multiplied. The whole nation has been sent to school. Its mind has been so awakened that it can hardly be put back to sleep again. Its avidity for knowledge, for the sciences and the arts, has been stimulated by Stalin's government to the point where it has become insatiable and embarrassing. It should be remarked that, although Stalin has kept Russia isolated from the contemporary influences of the west, he has encouraged and fostered every interest in what he calls the 'cultural heritage' of the west. Perhaps in no country have the young been imbued with so great a respect and love for the classical literature and art of other nations as in Russia. This is one of the important differences between the educational methods of nazism and Stalinism. Another is that Stalin has not, like Hitler, forbidden the new generation to read and study the classics of their own literature whose ideological outlook does not accord with his. While tyrannizing the living poets, novelists, historians, painters, and even composers, he has displayed, on the whole, a strange pietism for the dead ones. . . .



The whole structure of Russian society has undergone a change so profound and so many sided that it cannot really be reversed. It is possible to imagine a violent reaction of the Russian people itself against the state of siege in which it has been living so long. It is even possible to imagine something like a political restoration. But it is certain that even such a restoration would touch merely the surface of Russian society and that it would demonstrate its impotence vis-a-vis the work done by the revolution even more thoroughly than the Stuart and the Bourbon restorations had done. For of Stalinist Russia it is even truer than of any other revolutionary nation that 'twenty years have done the work of twenty generations. . . .

The better part of Stalin's work is as certain to outlast Stalin himself as the better parts of the work of Cromwell and Napoleon have outlasted them.<sup>179</sup>

According to Medvedev, it is these accomplishments that must, in good part, account for the high level of popularity of the Party's General Secretary, especially among the working people of the USSR.<sup>180</sup> Medvedev concludes:

It was known that Party and state leaders were being arrested as 'enemies of the people', but at the same time new schools, factories, and palaces of culture were rising everywhere. Military leaders were being arrested as spies, but the Party was building a strong, modern army. Scientists were being arrested as wreckers, but Soviet science had developed rapidly with the Party's support. Writers were being arrested as Trotskyites and counter-revolutionaries, but some literary works appeared that were real masterpieces. Leaders in the union republics were arrested as nationalists, but the formerly oppressed nationalities were improving their lot, and friendship among the peoples of the USSR was growing. And this obvious progress filled Soviet hearts with pride, engendering confidence in the Party that was organizing it and in the man who stood at the head of the Party.<sup>181</sup>

### **Invasion, Reconstruction and the Renewed Threat of Invasion: 1941-54**

The period of World War II was relatively liberal in Soviet history — at least for all those that supported the 'Great Patriotic War'. Nationalism and religion alike were given considerably wider currency than at any time since the Revolution, while positive attitudes to the West and the possibilities of co-operation with capitalist powers had never been so acceptable, either before or since. Harsh measures were, however, taken against those who collaborated or were falsely suspected of collaborating, and some who were thought to be potential collaborators with the Nazi invaders. The Volga



Germans, whose position was similar to that of the Japanese Americans, became suspect owing to their particular language and culture, and were largely relocated to non-strategic areas but, unlike Japanese-Americans, without confinement. At the end of World War II a number of small, mostly traditionally Islamic nationalities, including the Crimean Tartars, were relocated in Central Asia, because of alleged mass collaboration with the Nazis. In the mid-1950s, however, all accusations of mass collaboration were withdrawn, and almost all the people were allowed to return en masse to their previous areas, and in general allowed to reconstitute themselves as autonomous units. The prominent exception has been the Crimean Tartars, and although some individuals have returned to the Crimea, their return en masse has been officially discouraged and they have not been allowed to re-establish an autonomous political unit (as far as can be determined on the grounds of the strategic location of the Crimea). The other important group allowed to return to its old areas in the mid-1950s, but not reconstituted as an autonomous political entity, was the Volga Germans.

The immediate post-War period in the Soviet Union for the most part continued to be one of relative tolerance. In Roy Medvedev's words:

... right after the War the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet decreed an end to the death penalty, even for the most serious crimes. The spy mania and universal suspicion that prevailed before the War tended to disappear, especially in view of the drastic change in the international situation. The Soviet Union was no longer isolated.<sup>182</sup>

With the onset of the Cold War in 1947-48, another wave of paranoia swept the Party, largely centring on the possible effect of millions of Soviet citizens (including many former prisoners-of-war) who had spent the War years in the 'cosmopolitan' West, and as a result had, perhaps, been recruited by foreign intelligence agencies; this paranoia was carefully cultivated by US intelligence agencies.<sup>183</sup> A national campaign against Western imperialist influences (the 'anti-Cosmopolitan' campaign) was launched and, in the 1948-50 period, resulted in the arrests of numerous intellectuals, of whom many were sent to the labour camps for re-education. During this campaign intellectuals were accused of 'praising American technology', 'praising American democracy', 'worshipping the West', etc.<sup>184</sup> Possibly a few thousand Party officials were arrested and sentenced to labour camps on suspicion of disloyalty; a few were executed. The most famous case at this time was the so-called 'Leningrad Affair' in which many leaders of the local Party organization were accused of 'cosmopolitanism', 'Titoism' and conspiring with, or at least serving, Western imperialism by attempting to destroy the unity of the Socialist camp.<sup>185</sup>

Some of those released from labour camps at the end of the war were again detained, as were some ex-prisoners-of-war, often without concrete charges, but simply on the grounds of 'preventive confinement'. A number of former emigrés, who had returned to the USSR in the liberal 1945-46 period,



were also arrested in 1949-50 on charges of 'espionage' or 'anti-Soviet activity abroad'.<sup>186</sup>

According to Brzezinski:

It would seem that the immediate post-war years were ones of re-integration and consolidation, of gradual reassertion of the controls which had grown lax during the war. It was the period of increasing emphasis on political and ideological uniformity and of a return to the orthodox Party line. It was marked by the growing stiffness of the Soviet Union in the international arena, and by increasing application of its coercive powers at home. . . .

Initially under Zhdanov's leadership, this period, frequently referred to as the Zhdanovshchina, became characterized by a general tightening-up not only in the areas discussed previously but also in the arts, letters, and sciences. Conformity, uniformity, orthodoxy – these were demanded.<sup>187</sup>

But as Brzezinski went on:

But none of this could compare either in intensity, scope, or nature of consequences with the pre-war holocaust of the Yezhov era. The purge was comparatively restrained, and conducted with greater caution. The consequences of dismissal or expulsion were not necessarily arrest and forced labour but more frequently transfer or demotion or both. The charges against those purged, which previously emphasized socio-economic origins (especially during the years 1930-35) or political subversion (1935-40), changed to accusations of inefficiency or corruption. . . .<sup>188</sup>

Clearly the reason for the tightening of control in Soviet society at this time was primarily the tense international situation. In 1947, for the first time in history, the US instituted a peace-time draft. The Communist Parties were expelled from the governments of France and Italy, and the British, French and Americans decided to unite their zones of occupation in Germany. The implementation of the economic integration of the three Western Zones in June 1948 led to the Soviet attempt to obtain the return of the western part of Berlin to their administration (the Berlin Blockade and Airlift). This marked the beginning of all-out Cold War. In September 1948, the Parliamentary Council for Western Germany was convened and the anti-Marxist Konrad Adenauer became President; and the Federal Republic of Germany was proclaimed in May 1949. Western Germany was then gradually rearmed and, against the strong protest of the Soviets, phased into the Western alliance system. In 1949 the Western European powers and the US established the NATO alliance against further socialist revolutions in Europe. The Korean Civil War broke out in June 1950, after two years of growing hostility between the two regimes – both of which claimed to be



the legitimate government of the entire country. In September 1950, the US intervened and within two months had driven the Communist forces to the Chinese and Soviet borders, and threatened to carry their offensive into Manchuria as part of a world wide strategy of 'rolling back Communism'.

The US monopoly of the atomic bomb throughout 1949, the devastated state of the Soviet economy (reconstruction from war damage was not completed until 1950) and the strident anti-Communist polemics of the Americans and British, greatly intensified Soviet fears in the 1948-50 period.

After reaching its peak in 1949 the anti-Western and anti-Titoist campaigns began to subside, and by the end of 1950 arrests of Party leaders and 'cosmopolitan intellectuals' had virtually ended. The level of diversity permitted and encouraged in the media now expanded. The Soviets too, now had the atomic bomb; the reconstruction of the country from Nazi devastation was completed; the Chinese Revolution had triumphed and consolidated itself; the extreme crisis, manifested in the Berlin crisis of 1948-49 and the split with Tito in 1948, had subsided.

The 1951-52 period, however, again saw a reversal of the liberalization policies as the international situation became threatening. In spring 1951, General Douglas MacArthur called for an all-out war against Communism, including the atom bombing of Manchuria; in September 1951 the Western powers announced the formation of a unified military command in Western Europe, that would include a rearmed Germany. In May 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany formally signed a military treaty with the European Defence Community. Negotiations for a truce in the Korean War broke down in November 1952. The mood in the US became increasingly ugly as McCarthyism intensified and feelings grew that Truman was being too 'soft' on international Communism. Two generals, MacArthur and Eisenhower, were increasingly mentioned as Republican candidates for the Presidency in the November 1952 elections. The rhetoric of 'getting tough on Communism' became ever more prevalent.

In November 1952 General Eisenhower was elected US President. Taking office in January 1953 he appointed a number of hard line anti-Communist officials to handle foreign policy. The Dulles brothers, who became Secretary of State and CIA Director respectively, threatened a 'roll back of Communism'. They soon organized active interventions to overthrow regimes insufficiently supportive of US imperialist interests, for example, the CIA restoration of the Shah of Iran in 1953 and the overthrow of the democratic government of Guatemala in 1954.

In response, the political atmosphere within the USSR heated up. In January 1953, immediately after General Eisenhower took office, *Pravda* revived the theory that 'The more we progress, the more intense will be the struggle of enemies of the people.' *Pravda* went on:

Fragments of the shattered exploiting classes . . . masked epigones of defeated anti-Soviet groups – Mensheviks, S-Rs, Trotskyites,



Bukharinites, bourgeois nationalists. . . . all sorts of degenerated elements — people who kowtow to all things foreign, pilferers of socialist property. . . . The Anglo-American imperialists are now placing their bets on such people.<sup>189</sup>

There were a few arrests, specifically of a group of allegedly Zionist doctors accused of attempting to assassinate Stalin, and a number of officials and state security agents in Soviet Georgia, little came of this campaign. For about a year after Stalin's death in March 1953 a number of people, including the head of state security Beria, were shot. But both the domestic and international situation soon stabilized, and as a result a level of tolerance unknown in Soviet society since the late 1920s soon developed.

In July 1953, an armistice was finally signed in the Korean War. In 1954 the Geneva Agreements ending the War in Indochina were signed. In 1955, the first summit meeting since 1945 was held between the top leaders of the USSR and the Western powers, and the treaty permanently neutralizing Austria and providing for the withdrawal of Western and Soviet troops was signed. Peaceful co-existence was in the air and the pressure on the Soviet Union was relaxed. No more under a state of external siege as intense as that in the 1928-53 period, the level of political repression in Soviet society never again approached the level of those years. Further, with socialist reconstruction and collectivization complete, and a high level of legitimacy of the Soviet system achieved, never again was there the extraordinary need for domestic mobilization or for deliberate creation of unifying symbols such as had existed over the previous 25 years of almost permanent crisis.

In March 1954, the Security Police were divided into a Ministry of Internal Affairs and a Committee of State Security, and their powers considerably weakened. There was a purge of its leading officials and a number of military men and Party officials were put in charge of 'cleaning house'. Labour camps were radically reduced in size and almost all political prisoners released; conditions for political detainees in the few remaining camps were largely restored to the pre-1937 norm of re-education through work and study. The abuses of the 1936-38 period, as well as the deportation of some minor nationalities for allegedly collaborating with the Nazis, were denounced and rehabilitation instituted. Considerable intellectual diversity was now permitted, for example, even Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was officially published.

In summary, the historical variations in the degree of tolerance of public advocacy (as well as in due process guarantees) in the Soviet Union can be fully explained as a result of the variance in the same kinds of forces that operate on all states to produce similar results. Thus, just as is the case with explaining the considerable historical variation among states and over time in the right to emigrate from one's country, there is no need for further hypotheses.

As will be seen in the next chapter the rather high level of tolerance of



public advocacy and due process rights in the Soviet Union in the 1955-78 period (high by almost any historical standards) was a result of the high level of legitimacy and domestic stability the regime had attained, as well as of the now relatively relaxed international situation. The decrease in the level of tolerance of dissident activities in the 1978-83 period, in turn, was a result of the renewed Cold War atmosphere of these years.

## Notes

1. R. Medvedev, 1971, p. 389.
2. Ibid., and Deutscher, 1960, p. 346.
3. Medvedev, 1971, p. 390.
4. Ibid., p. 388.
5. Ibid., p. 390.
6. R. Medvedev, 1979, ch. 9.
7. Deutscher, 1960, p. 346.
8. See Schapiro, 1960, p. 263.
9. Cited in Khrushchev, 1956, p. 28.
10. Cited in Medvedev, 1971, p. 274.
11. Cited in Schapiro, 1960, p. 211.
12. Ibid., pp. 265-6.
13. See Ibid., p. 266.
14. Medvedev, 1971, p. 381, 382; Schapiro, 1971, p. 193.
15. See Shapiro, 1960, p. 203.
16. Medvedev, 1971, p. 384.
17. See Shapiro, 1960, pp. 321-2.
18. Ibid., p. 332.
19. Hingley, 1974, pp. 171, 182-3.
20. See Deutscher, 1960, pp. 311-6.
21. Medvedev, 1979, p. 187.
22. Cited in Hough and Fainsod, 1979, pp. 163-4.
23. Fitzpatrick, 1979, p. 11.
24. Ibid., p. 18.
25. Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 149.
26. Ibid.
27. See Fitzpatrick, 1978; Hough, 1978; Lapidus, 1978; Starr, 1978; Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 149.
28. Strong, 1957, ch. 3; Deutscher, 1960, p. 323.
29. Ulam, 1973, p. 296; Medvedev, 1971, p. 72; Deutscher, 1960, p. 313.
30. Ulam, 1973, p. 305.
31. Ibid., p. 298.
32. Deutscher, 1960, p. 313.
33. Medvedev, 1970, p. 80.
34. Medvedev, 1971, p. 81.
35. Deutscher, 1960, p. 319.
36. Medvedev, 1971, p. 87.
37. Davies, 1980, p. 393.
38. Ibid., p. 172.



39. Deutscher, 1960, pp. 294-5.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 550.
41. Davies, 1980, pp. 51-2.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 208; Schapiro, 1960, p. 394.
43. Davies, 1980, p. 204.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 205.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
46. Medvedev, 1971, p. 84.
47. Cited in Davies, 1980, pp. 182-3.
48. See Deutscher, 1960, p. 323; Fainsod, 1958, p. 142; Ulam, 1973, pp. 326-9.
49. Cited in Davies, 1980, p. 187.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
51. See Strong, 1957, ch. 7; Medvedev, 1971, p. 100; Fainsod, 1958, pp. 183, 242-51.
52. See Davies, 1980, pp. 222-3.
53. Medvedev, 1971, p. 100; Elam, 1973, p. 322; Fainsod, 1958, pp. 183, 196-201.
54. Medvedev, 1971, p. 100.
55. Deutscher, 1960, pp. 412, 420; Deutscher, 1960, p. 325; Ulam, 1973, p. 332.
57. Cited in Davies, 1980, pp. 269-70.
58. Schapiro, 1960, p. 385; Ulam, 1973, p. 329.
59. See Deutscher, 1960, p. 331.
60. Schapiro, 1960, p. 385; Hickley, 1975, p. 205.
61. See Ulam, 1973, p. 342.
62. Davies, 1980, p. 373.
63. Schapiro, 1961, p. 389.
64. Cited in Ulam, 1973, p. 343; Fainsod, 1958, p. 243; Davies, 1980, pp. 235-6.
65. See Schapiro, 1960, p. 385; Medvedev, 1971, p. 92.
66. Deutscher, 1960, p. 325.
67. See Ulam, 1973, p. 350.
68. See Medvedev, 1971, pp. 92-3; Ulam, 1973, p. 345.
69. Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 152; Davies, 1980, p. 412.
70. See Medvedev, 1971, p. 100; Deutscher, 1960, p. 33.
71. Wheatcroft, 1981, p. 287.
72. Medvedev, 1979, p. 140.
73. See *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.
74. Wheatcroft, 1981, p. 285.
75. Medvedev, 1971, pp. 11-15; Ulam, 1973, p. 336.
76. See Davies, 1980, p. 374.
77. Medvedev, 1971, pp. 115-6.
78. See Deutscher, 1960, p. 254; Schapiro, 1960, pp. 399-400; Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 164; Fitzpatrick, 1978, p. 11; Getty, 1979, pp. 157-8, 321.
79. Schapiro, 1960, p. 380; Deutscher, 1960, p. 350.
80. Schapiro, 1960, p. 397.
81. See Getty, 1979, p. 270.
82. Cited in Rigby, 1968, p. 201.
83. See Getty, 1979, pp. 112, 270, 447.



84. See Fainsod, 1958, p. 222.
85. See Getty, 1979, pp. 84, 149.
86. See Rigby, 1968, p. 180; Getty, 1979, p. 129.
87. Rigby, 1968, p. 204.
88. Getty, 1979, pp. 83, 280.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
90. See Getty, 1979, p. 241.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
92. See Rigby, 1968, pp. 201-4; Fainsod, 1958, pp. 221-2.
93. See Getty, 1979, pp. 89, 202, 203, 286, 321, 398, 523, 554.
94. Getty, 1979, p. 499.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 492.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 553.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 203-4.
98. *Ibid.*, pp. 557-8.
99. *Ibid.*, pp. 380, 406, 551.
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 402-7, 553.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 426, 442, 550-1.
102. See Deutscher, 1960, pp. 354-6.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 356.
104. Ulam, 1973, p. 381; Medvedev, 1971, p. 162; Hingley, 1974, p. 247.
105. Medvedev, 1971, p. 393.
106. See *Ibid.*, p. 275; Ulam, 1973, p. 426; Deutscher, 1960, pp. 358-9.
107. Strong, 1957, p. 67.
108. Cited in Khrushchev, 1956, p. 41.
109. See Getty, 1979, p. 327.
110. Getty, 1979, p. 327.
111. Brzezinski, 1956, pp. 117-8.
112. See also Getty, 1979, p. 280.
113. Brzezinski, 1956, pp. 118-9.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
116. See Fainsod, 1958, pp. 132-7, 190-1, 232-7, 423-28.
117. Brzezinski, 1956, p. 91; see also Medvedev, 1971, p. 234.
118. Rigby, 1968, p. 213.
119. See Deutscher, 1960, p. 380; Medvedev, 1971, p. 189.
120. See Khrushchev, 1956, p. 30.
121. See Tucker, 1971, p. 51; Ulam, 1973, pp. 383, 409, 422-3; Deutscher, 1960, p. 373; Medvedev, 1971, p. 172.
122. Cited in Ulam, 1973, p. 475.
123. Schapiro, 1960, p. 432; Ulam, 1973, p. 488; Brzezinski, 1956, pp. 122-7; Getty, 1979, p. 475.
124. Schapiro, 1960, p. 433; Brzezinski, 1956, p. 122.
125. Cited in Brzezinski, 1956, p. 129.
126. Brzezinski, 1956, p. 123.
127. See Unger, 1969, p. 327; Rigby, 1968, p. 212.
128. Rigby, 1968, p. 212.
129. See Wheatcroft 1981, p. 290.
130. Khrushchev, 1956, pp. 22-3; see also Ulam, 1976, p. 440; Strong, 1957, pp. 62, 66; Medvedev, 1956, pp. 182, 189, 192, 202.



131. Wheatcroft, 1971, p. 290.
132. Khrushchev, 1956, pp. 22-3.
133. See Deutscher, 1960, pp. 379-81; Schapiro, 1960, p. 420; Medvedev, 1971, pp. 210, 213; Hingley, 1974, pp. 247-64.
134. See Brzezinski, 1956, p. 108.
135. Ibid., p. 108.
136. Beck and Godin, 1951, p. 76.
137. See Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 176.
138. See Brzezinski, 1956, p. 123.
139. Kennan and Hough, 1979, p. 177.
140. See Getty, 1979, p. 471.
141. See Brzezinski, 1956, pp. 98-9; see also Medvedev, 1979, p. 234; Ulam, 1973, pp. 440-1.
142. See for example, Medvedev, 1971, p. 239; Ulam, 1973, pp. 440-1.
143. Rigby, 1968, p. 212; Unger, 1969, p. 328.
144. See Unger, 1969, p. 238.
145. Rigby, 1968, p. 213.
146. Ibid., p. 203.
147. Green, 1935.
148. Wheatcroft, 1981, p. 286.
149. See Ibid., p. 283.
150. Ibid., pp. 272, 289.
151. Ibid., p. 286.
152. Ibid., p. 287.
153. Brzezinski, 1956, p. 108.
154. Jones, 1976, pp. 149, 150.
155. See *The USSR in Figures* for 1978.
156. Getty, 1979, p. 502.
157. Ibid., p. 503.
158. Ibid., p. 516.
159. Ibid., pp. 503, 511.
160. Ibid., p. 504.
161. Ibid., pp. 504-5.
162. Ibid., p. 451.
163. Ibid., pp. 199, 450-3.
164. Ibid., p. 457.
165. Ibid., p. 457.
166. Khrushchev, 1956, pp. 22, 29.
167. See Steward, 1974.
168. See Medvedev, 1971, p. 300; also Schapiro, 1960, p. 425.
169. Cited in Tucker, 1971, p. 66.
170. See Fainsod, 1958, pp. 191-2.
171. Cited in Ulam, 1973, p. 440.
172. Schapiro, 1960, p. 440.
173. Ibid., p. 443.
174. Deutscher, 1960, p. 384.
175. Medvedev, 1971, p. 430.
176. Ibid., p. 362.
177. Getty, 1979, p. 557.
178. Ibid., p. 169.



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- 179. Deutscher, 1960, p. 568-70.
- 180. See Medvedev, 1971, pp. 362, 430.
- 181. Ibid., p. 372.
- 182. Ibid., p. 480.
- 183. See, for example, Steward, 1974.
- 184. Medvedev, 1971, p. 483; 1979, p. 146; Hingley, 1974, p. 411.
- 185. See Medvedev, 1971, pp. 480, 481; Hingley, 1974, p. 411.
- 186. See Medvedev, 1971, p. 485; 1979, p. 146.
- 187. Brzezinski, 1956, pp. 147-8.
- 188. Ibid., p. 148.
- 189. Cited in Medvedev, 1971, p. 558.



## 8. Tolerance and Repression in the Soviet Union: 1965-82

The level of repression, and tolerance of public advocacy, in the Soviet Union from 1965 to 1982 is systematically examined in this chapter. 'Dissidence' is defined, the role of the dissident movement explored, and the range of permitted and prohibited debate elaborated. The actual number and class nature of the dissidents are discussed, along with the degree of support for them within the Soviet Union. The methods and strategy of the dissident movement are examined, as are government policies for dealing with them. The wide range of sanctions, from informational warnings to corrective labour camps and categorization as mentally ill, are discussed along with the trends over time in government policy towards them. The various political currents among dissidents are discussed, showing that there are three currents: the traditional authoritarian right; pro-Western liberals; and a smaller, Marxist current, which tends to converge with the liberals.

### Trends in Contemporary Soviet Policy and the Dissident Movement

When, in 1964, Khrushchev was replaced as Party Secretary it at first seemed that further liberalization was about to take place. But in 1965 the new leadership began pressuring the dissident movement that, in the wake of Khrushchev's removal, was becoming vociferous.<sup>1</sup> In response to the tightening of government policy relating to dissidents in 1965, the oppositional movement became more politicized.<sup>2</sup> The period 1966-68 saw a high level of overt political dissidence in the USSR largely focused against the government restrictions on liberalization in general and around the trial of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel in particular.<sup>3</sup> Scores of petitions and public letters, self published journals and newsletters began to appear. Until 1968, the Soviet government was relatively tolerant of this oppositional movement.<sup>4</sup> In March 1968, however, the government began to take a harder line; numerous dissidents were interrogated and a few professional leaders were dismissed from their privileged positions.

From 1971 to 1976 the Soviet government pursued a fairly moderate and consistent policy towards the dissidents. Occasionally, a few of the most



prominent and provocative were arrested and sentenced, from time to time a particularly prominent activist was expelled, warnings, police questioning and pressure were generally maintained, but neither especially harsh penalties, mass arrests or deportations, or other forms of heavy crackdowns on political dissidents were in evidence. The government's policy seems to have contained dissidence fairly effectively. It avoided creating martyrs and kept Soviet society reasonably open for the expression of a wide range of opinions, while deterring criticism of the underlying assumptions of Soviet society and thus enhancing the legitimacy of its basic institutions. In these years the state was relatively tolerant towards dissidents.<sup>5</sup>

In 1977, however, the state began to take a harder line. Prominent dissidents such as Aleksander Ginzburg, Anatoly Shcharansky, and Yuri Orlov were arrested and tried. During 1979-80, the breakdown of detente and the revival of the Cold War resulted in harsher measures against pro-Western voices whose public statements were picked up by and used by anti-Soviet forces in the West. Through a combination of exile, confinement and, increasingly, expulsion from the country, the post-1978 Soviet campaign to contain pro-Western public dissidents has been effective in largely suppressing such public opposition. Even Sakharov, who for so long was immune from sanctions was exiled, but not confined.

The increase in arrests, combined with the policies of forcing many dissidents to emigrate, and the lack of popular support for their ideas, depleted the ranks of active dissidents virtually to nil. Roy Medvedev argued in 1980:

The weakening and decline of the dissident movement in recent years is an undeniable fact . . . the pressure of the authorities, emigration from the country, natural weariness, the lack of any clear-cut accomplishments, and gradual but by no means progressive shifts of public mood — all this has largely shaped the dissident movement. . . .

Here we have only a few dozen dissidents left; today there are more of them in Paris and New York than there are in Moscow. The leaders are now all in prison, in internal exile, or abroad. . . . The outlook is very dark indeed.

The petition in behalf of Sakharov was signed by barely twenty persons. . . . For the trials of the '60s there were thousands of signatures . . .<sup>6</sup>

Roy Medvedev's brother, Zhores, argued in 1981:

The competition and the disputes between the USSR and the USA, while sharpening political and diplomatic confrontation, weakening detente and inducing some revival of the Cold War, has increased repressive measures within the USSR against political dissidents with a 'Western' orientation and also intensified Western publicity for these groups.<sup>7</sup>



## **Definition of Dissident Activity in the USSR**

The Soviet Constitution and legal codes guarantee the right to express an opinion publicly, through speaking, publishing and other peaceful means. These legally guaranteed rights are, in fact, widely practised.

An extensive range of diverse opinion on a wide range of issues is manifest in the mass media, as well as in specialized journals and conferences within the Soviet Union; the press, too, is full of debates on a great variety of important issues.<sup>8</sup> There is virtual consensus among those in the West who study the Soviet media that the extent of public debate in the USSR has been growing, and that in recent years, essentially all proposals for gradual change in the policy of the Soviet government or Communist Party have been aired in the mass media. Even in the sensitive areas of foreign and nationality policy, where advocacy of basic changes is permitted only in veiled form, inferences emerge out of lively public debate of actual facts.<sup>9</sup>

In the post-Khrushchev era there have been few party policies and few aspects of Soviet society that have been immune from attack if the attack is carefully phrased. There has been almost no proposal for incremental change in Party policy that has not been published in some form or another. Even on foreign policy and nationalities policy, where actual advocacy of policy change is permitted only in the most veiled terms, scholars have been able to debate the facts of the situation and thereby imply contrasting views of the policy that is required.<sup>10</sup>

Merely by reading a broad selection of Soviet materials, we can easily see that the post-Stalin leadership has been willing to permit a wide-ranging expression of views in a number of public forums – in general newspapers, in magazines, in scholarly journals, in books, and, even more, of course, in more restricted conferences and meetings. By the mid- and late-1960s, the typical situation had become that found in a survey of Soviet social policies: 'Every policy discussed in this study has been debated vigorously by specialists and middle-level administrators not only in professional journals, but in the daily press as well.'<sup>11</sup>

Some specific issues around which considerable public debate has occurred in recent years have included: Khrushchev's attempt – from the late 1950s to 1964 – to proletarianize higher education; the ongoing, sharp debates about the greater access to higher education of children of the intelligentsia, and the consequences of this for the creation of a privileged stratum; and, between 1958 and 1962, the role of the Communist Party in the military. Discussions continue on the role of writers and artists (the relative role of artistic freedom and social responsibility to contribute to constructing socialism); on centralization or decentralization of decision-making; environmental protection issues, the most famous example being the debate on the pollution of Lake Baikal; if the birthrate can best be increased by



paying mothers a wage to stay at home, or by improving daycare service; and whether enterprise managers should be elected by workers in the plants.<sup>12</sup>

Observers, otherwise quite hostile to the Soviet Union, claim that the public debates, struggles and criticisms, become increasingly penetrating, as policy making in the Soviet Union becomes more decentralized and the number of participants constantly increases.<sup>13</sup> Basic policies are increasingly formulated, discussed and challenged in public forums and editorial statements in periodicals;<sup>14</sup> different Soviet papers and journals more or less openly take sides on public issues. This is especially so with proposed new welfare policies, each of which is vigorously debated, both by specialists and ordinary citizens in professional journals and the popular press. Public debate on proposed legislation has become a central political institution; a law is proposed, a period of wide-ranging public debate follows, and a revised version of the law is finally promulgated incorporating the results of the public criticism.<sup>15</sup>

Generally, both in the West and within dissident circles, observers admit that the range of political tolerance has continually increased since the mid-1950s. For example, Zhores Medvedev argues:

Political control has not disappeared but it has become more flexible and provides more freedoms in private life . . . individual activity and attempts to criticize internal and international Soviet policy from clearly Marxist and socialist positions are more or less tolerated, which is, I believe, a reflection of the new diversity of socialist and communist movements in the world, the appearance of 'Eurocommunist' ideology and its more active influence upon developments within the USSR.<sup>16</sup>

Letters to the editor in the Soviet press, which often amount to guest editorials or articles, serve as a major forum for the Soviet people to present their opinions and participate directly in the confrontation of often sharply conflicting ideas. Letters to government agencies, party organs, etc., also play a significant role in initiating public discussion and influencing the decision-making process.<sup>17</sup> The press serves the function of ombudsman for the Soviet people. In 1970, *Pravda* received 360,000 letters and *Izvestia* 500,000. Obviously, all these letters cannot be published, but, by law, all must be processed and referred to the agencies concerned, and, by law too, a grievance must be responded to within 15 days.<sup>18</sup>

Legal reforms have been publicly debated in universities, legal research institutes, jurist's associations, factories, and the public press and journals — for example, in 1961 around the reform of the Civil Law Code. Professional intelligentsia, especially economists and jurists, in their specialized papers, journals, and at conferences, engage in especially wide debate, and set out various public policy options, seeking to convince their colleagues and the public through debates at meetings and their publications.<sup>19</sup>



The range of opinions that can be publicly expressed in the Soviet Union does, however, have its limitations. While the Soviet Constitution of 1977 stipulates (in common with the previous Constitution) a wide and impressive range of freedoms, these are explicitly delimited by the obligation not to employ them to undermine the basic institutions of the society.\* Article 39 of the new Constitution states that citizens may not exercise their rights 'to the detriment of the interests of society or the state', and Article 50, which guarantees freedom of expression in various forms, is prefaced by the statement that such rights are guaranteed 'in accordance with the interests of the people and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system'.

The fundamental issues, which are considered as settled and as the basis of the socialist institutions of Soviet society, and thus not matters to be publicly challenged, since this would hinder the construction of socialism are: (1) socialism as a system and communism as an ideal (although not criticisms of specific practices and policies); (2) challenges to the idea of the leading role of the Communist Party in Soviet society or to its fundamental integrity (but not criticisms of either concrete abuses by Party officials or specific policies of the Party); (3) the existence of the military as necessary to defend Soviet society (though not military strategy and the political role of the military). In addition, public criticism of the persons of the top leaders is not permitted (but lower and intermediate leaders, and the policies and programmes of the top leaders, may be criticized).<sup>20</sup> With these exceptions statements critical of every other aspect of 'Soviet reality' appear in the mass media.

The Soviet press contains critical statements — often extremely critical in nature — about almost every aspect of the Soviet political system, society, and ideology, but the context in which they are raised, the way in which they are phrased, is all-important. . . .<sup>21</sup>

The range of tolerated opinion varies according to the audience; the widest range is found in the specialized press and informal situations, and the narrowest in the mass press and, above all, in opinions expressed to foreign enemies of the Soviet Union. The theory here is that when threatened by foreign enemies a more or less monolithic image should be conveyed in order to maximize the appearance of strength and thus minimize any external dangers.

... the Soviet leadership exercises a kind of selective censorship by restricting the more radical advocacy of policy change or the more comprehensive criticisms of the status quo to specialized journals and

\* This, of course, is merely a formal expression of the general rule operative in *all* societies, including (see chapter 6) the United States.



papers. Debate on Soviet military strategy is, for example, limited almost exclusively to the military press. Any Soviet citizen is perfectly free to read specialized journals, but since, in practice, few besides the relevant specialists do so, the transmission of some types of information or policy ideas is basically limited to the particular group working in the particular policy area. Thus, to say that vigorous policy debates now take place in virtually every policy area in the Soviet Union and that these debates have involved carefully phrased criticism of the fundamentals of the system is not to say that policy debates are freely conducted in all Soviet arenas.<sup>22</sup>

At one extreme, the greatest freedom of expression seems to be permitted in more or less private gatherings — at a party, with a group of colleagues at work, in a bar. . . . Certainly it would be absolutely wrong to think that the restrictions on publication of ideas also necessarily apply to oral expression. . . .

. . . within certain limits discussions in scholarly sessions are rather free-swinging — often, in fact, more ‘impolite’ and unrestrained on a personal level than those in the West. The regime also does not usually seem to impose severe punishment on the transmission of quite radical views directly to the authorities, and it often has even been semi-tolerant of highly ‘illegitimate’ communications that are confined to the samizdat network with its individual reproductions of documents either by hand or by typewriter.

At the other extreme, the type of activity that has provoked the quickest and most repressive governmental action has been the attempt to reach a larger audience in a more organized, more formal manner — gathering signatures on a petition, distributing leaflets, making a speech in a public square, staging a demonstration, transmitting documents to the West.<sup>23</sup>

It should be stressed that somewhat basic criticisms *are* generally tolerated even if technically illegal, unless such criticisms are transmitted to the West and used there as propaganda against the Soviet Union or actual organizations are formed which engage in subversive activities (i.e. more than simply circulating critical documents within the Soviet Union through interpersonal networks).<sup>24</sup>

Two articles in the Criminal Code of the Russian Republic deal with the violation of the basic assumptions of Soviet society. Article 70, the more serious, specifies as illegal activity carried out with the purpose of subverting or weakening Soviet authority:

Agitation or propaganda carried out with the purpose of subverting or weakening Soviet authority or in order to commit particular, especially dangerous, crimes against the state, or the oral dissemination for the same purpose of deliberate fabrications which defame the Soviet political and social system, or the dissemination or manufacture



or keeping for the same purpose, of literature of such content, shall be punishable by deprivation of freedom for a period of from six months to seven years, with or without additional exile for a term of two to five years, or by exile for a term of two to five years.<sup>25</sup>

The less severe Articles 190-1 define as illegal activities which deliberately spread 'anti-Soviet falsehoods':

The systematic dissemination in oral form of deliberate fabrications which discredit the Soviet political and social system, or the manufacture or dissemination in written, printed or other form of works of such content, shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a period of up to three years, or by corrective tasks for a period of up to one year, or by a fine of up to 100 roubles.<sup>26</sup>

Dissidents are most frequently charged and tried under these two articles, usually after the material they write or the activities they engage in have been used in the West against the Soviet Union.

Much dissident activity is directed towards eliminating such Articles from Soviet law, and to the defence of those who have clearly violated them. These, together with their public challenges to the assumptions of Soviet society (already noted) and their propensity to release information to the West, in the full knowledge that it will be used to discredit the Soviet system, defines that group of people to whom we will refer as *political dissidents*. Political dissidents, then, are distinct from those with reservations about the Soviet system or who make specific criticisms of Soviet socialism, but do not publicly attack the system *per se*, and from national and religious groups such as Ukrainian nationalists or Zionist Jews, who simply desire national independence or emigration to the West.

## The Extent of the Dissident Movement

Those engaged in any form of organized political dissidence in the USSR have been an extremely small minority with little support from any sector of the Soviet population. Estimates of the total number of activists made by people sympathetic to the dissident movement have ranged from a few dozen to ten thousand. The definition of an active dissident is one who is active in the production and distribution of the underground periodicals, the writing and dissemination of political 'samizdat', or the signing and circulation of petitions for formal civil liberties. Estimates of the aggregate total number of signatures on petitions in the 1965-73 period vary between 1,000 and 2,000.<sup>27</sup> Roy Medvedev, one of the most prominent of contemporary Soviet dissidents, estimates that the number of active dissidents

... varies from time to time: in 1967-68 a few thousand, at the



beginning of the '60s a few hundred, now [the late 1970s] a few dozen. Of course, if you include those in confinement, again they would count in the hundreds or two to four thousand.<sup>28</sup>

The very small number of active dissidents against the Soviet system has reflected their lack of support in the general population. All active dissidents have generally acknowledged that their ideas and activities are unpopular and elicit no responsive chords in the Soviet population. The Soviet system has a high degree of legitimacy among almost all of its citizens, as is readily admitted by virtually all of its critics both inside and outside the USSR. The legitimacy of the regime was greatly enhanced by the trauma of World War II and the heroic, and very bloody, victory over the Nazi invaders (which not only generated great feelings of solidarity and sacrifice, but also confirmed the national fear of foreign intervention which has lasted until today). The Communist Party's successful industrialization and modernization programme has also generated massive support for the Soviet system, as has the high rate of upward mobility and the considerable Soviet achievements in science, education, public health and other welfare services.<sup>29</sup> Western Sovietologists (most of whom are not sympathizers of the Soviet system) essentially concede that there is widespread support for Soviet institutions among the Soviet people as a whole.<sup>30</sup>

The Medvedev brothers maintain that:

If we refer not to a well defined government but rather to socialism as a social system, then certainly today it claims the consensus of practically the entire population. Therefore it's no use hoping for a change; that would be about as unrealistic as the idea of turning present-day Europe back to the eighteenth century. . . .

. . . if by the term 'system' we mean not socialism but domination by the party, then I will say that beyond all doubt the vast majority of the population endorses the Soviet Communist Party. . . . So you see, our present form of government possesses such tremendous reserves that neither external pressures nor dissident agitation could, by themselves, bring about fundamental changes.<sup>31</sup>

The utopian dreams of some former dissidents, A. Amalrik for instance, predicting the collapse of the Soviet Union by 1984, have proven completely unfounded. Most of these dissidents now live abroad, and the regime which they criticized is now more stable and confident than ever. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The absence of receptivity to dissidents' ideas among the masses of the Soviet people has been reflected both in the failure of attempts to recruit supporters among them and in their general sense of the futility of such an attempt. Leading dissidents frequently bemoan the lack of common values between themselves and the working people — any attempts to reach out to them often result in working people denouncing them to the police. Amalrik,



a leading dissident, claimed 'To the majority of the people, the very word "freedom" is synonymous with disorder. . . . As for respecting the rights of an individual as such, the idea simply arouses bewilderment.' Other dissidents even reject the idea of popular support as a matter of principle, one commented, 'It is high time we were freed from the foolishness of populism. The most important thing is the individual and his rights.' The tiny protest demonstrations organized by dissidents from time to time are harassed by passers-by. One dissident who took part in a protest outside the courthouse during the trial of Alexander Ginzburg noted that, although the majority of those harassing the demonstration were workers from a Moscow auto plant who mobilized for the purpose, passers-by spontaneously joined in denouncing the protestors. Witnesses to the 1968 demonstration against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia reported similar, spontaneous activity.<sup>33</sup>

Another dissident reports:

An average Soviet man cannot understand that five people went out on Red Square to protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. 'What are they, schizophrenics? Probably the West paid them a lot. They wanted glory.' But the fact that these people simply could not refrain from expressing themselves, this idea, for an average Soviet man, is a crazy idea. He can't believe in it, and to speak of democracy in such a psychological climate is useless. That is why I think that if we are to speak of changes in the Soviet Union we must choose a less effective but more realistic road: gradually teaching the people to get accustomed to these concepts. To accomplish this in Soviet circumstances is extremely difficult and will be an extremely slow process.<sup>34</sup>

Roy Medvedev admits ' . . . there are practically no links between the dissidents and the masses.' <sup>35</sup>

Unlike most popular movements in their early stages the dissident movement has little support among students. The little student oppositional activity there has been in recent years seems mostly to have taken the form of a few, small local groups oriented to Maoism, neo-Marxism or 'Che' Guevara, and to be short lived, engaging only in sporadic activity, which typically ends on graduation.<sup>36</sup> The general lack of student interest in the 'democratic' movement suggests little potential mass appeal for the future. The distance maintained from the political dissident movement by somewhat larger, right-wing separatist, nationalist and Zionist immigration movements is further evidence of its unpopularity.<sup>37</sup>

Virtually all those involved in dissident activities are of the intelligentsia.<sup>38</sup> One study found that from 1967 and 1970, 80% and 90% of the signatories of petitions and protest letters were members of the technical and cultural intelligentsia.<sup>39</sup> Another analysis of signatories to petitions found that only 6% were workers.<sup>40</sup>



## **Strategy and Tactics of the Dissident Movement**

In descending order of importance there have been three basic tactics employed by the dissident movement: (1) direct appeals to the Western press and other Western institutions, governments and public opinion in the form of press conferences, statements, books published in the West, participation in foreign conferences, etc; (2) domestic circulation of 'samizdat' criticisms, sometimes formally addressed to leaders and leading bodies in the Soviet Union, periodicals (and sometimes lengthy manuscripts) circulated in type-written or photographic form among dissident and sympathetic circles (a great many of which reach the hands of Westerners, and are then published in the West) and (3) public protests, such as on the old Soviet Constitution Day 5 December or on specific occasions, such as after the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. Dissidents frequently engage in actions with the expectation of being detained and perhaps sentenced in order to create martyrs whom they know will be celebrated in the West — thus bringing external pressure on the Soviet regime.

Periodically, dissidents engage in small demonstrations in public squares on certain public holidays, or at key buildings such as foreign embassies around Moscow. Such demonstrations typically consist of perhaps a half dozen to a dozen and a half people, are peaceful, and often merely take the form of standing in silence. While the right of public demonstration is constitutionally guaranteed in the Soviet Union, this right like all others is qualified as to be exercised 'in the interest of the Soviet people'. Foreign reporters, who normally are notified of such protests in advance, are their primary audience. Consequently such minor protests are reported in the Western press and the demands involved are broadcast back to the Soviet Union. The West celebrates these occasions as signs of the lack of freedom and the existence of domestic discontent — that is, of weaknesses in Soviet socialism. As a result, such demonstrations are frequently stopped by the police and the leaders often charged with disturbing the peace.

A Soviet tradition that differences should not be resolved publicly is widely accepted by the Soviet people. Public demonstrations, however small and peaceful, violate that norm, especially when, as is typically the case, Western reporters are present. Again, the principle of presenting a monolithic front to foreign enemies is operative. Thus, in so far as any direct influence on the Soviet people or government is concerned, public demonstrations are regarded as counter-productive. They reinforce in most Soviet citizens the feeling that the 'Human Rights Movement' is disloyal; it undermines the image that the liberal wing of the dissident movement tries to create of itself as a non-insurrectionary loyal movement.<sup>41</sup>

Samizdat are publications, either one time critical manuscripts (literary or not) or somewhat irregular periodicals, generally reproduced on typewriters with carbon copies (or sometimes by photography) and circulated through a network of personal contacts; manuscripts and news items reach the editor of a periodical through the distribution network in the reverse



direction. A person receiving a copy of a samizdat normally types up a few copies and passes them on to sympathetic acquaintances. Usually each person keeps one copy and returns the original to the person from whom it was received. In this manner hundreds or sometimes thousands of copies of a manuscript can be produced and circulated through the dissident network, with some copies given to foreigners for publication in the West.<sup>42</sup> Studies of the samizdat materials that reach the West (and are collected by Radio Liberty in Munich, and available at several places in the US and Europe) show that the vast majority are directly concerned with civil liberties, and the remainder relate to such topics as Czechoslovakia or critiques of Marxism or Leninism.<sup>43</sup>

A major form of criticism circulated through the samizdat network has been the public protest letter, normally addressed to a leading official or government body, also, lengthier programmatic essays or briefs, which combine the protest language of the letter with a more detailed and documented argument.<sup>44</sup> A number of somewhat irregular published dissident periodicals that gather together material from a number of authors also circulate, but typically, after relatively few issues they are suppressed or abandoned, sometimes to reappear after a hiatus of a few years, perhaps under different editorship. The best known of such journals have included *Syntax* (edited by Ginzburg, 1958-60), *Phoenix* (edited by Galanskov, 1961-66) and *Sphinxes* (edited by Tarsis, 1965). Generally, periodicals focus mainly on political essays and poetry.<sup>45</sup>

The most important tactic of the Soviet dissident movement is to release information to the West which, in various forms, is then broadcast back to the Soviet Union by anti-Soviet radio stations such as Radio Liberty and the Voice of America; thus, potentially, reaching a much wider audience than they are able to reach directly and, more importantly, used by anti-Soviet forces in the West to mobilize pressure against the Soviet Union. This tactic includes holding press conferences for foreign journalists, giving television interviews, releasing samizdat material to Western reporters, making direct appeals to the UN, the US Congress (for example, Sakharov's appeal to the US Senate in support of the Jackson amendment restricting US trade with the USSR), or heads of Western governments, working with international organizations such as Amnesty International, the World Council of Churches, the International PEN and the Nobel Prize Committee, and participation in international conferences such as the European Security Conference.<sup>46</sup>

Some dissidents probably overestimate the effect their statements to the Western press have on the Soviet people, others know well that their primary impact lies in providing ammunition to anti-Soviet forces in the West which then lean all the harder on the Soviet Union. Roy Medvedev argues:

Without any doubt, foreign news reports provide an important source of information for the Soviet people. Experts calculate that about one fourth of the adults in the cities listen to them, but I think this estimate is exaggerated: those who listen regularly, not just from time to time,



are many fewer.<sup>47</sup>

The lack of popularity and resonance among the Soviet people (especially the workers) has, as we have seen, made dissidents aware of the impossibility of mobilizing and recruiting the Soviet people to their cause; almost universally, dissidents are convinced of the futility of attempting to mobilize the Soviet people in whom popular support of the regime is rooted. Therefore, conscious of the considerable interest of the Western capitalist countries in the Soviet Union — an interest based on hostility to its social, political and economic organization and the threat that growing Soviet influence represents to Western capitalism, especially in the less developed countries — the dissidents attempt to mobilize them in support of their goals. The traditionalist right, such as Solzhenitsyn explicitly endeavours to undermine the legitimacy of socialism, strengthen its enemies, hinder its spread, and strengthen the military might of the US and NATO. The liberals, by encouraging Western governments (especially the US) to restrict trade, cultural and scientific contacts, nuclear disarmament, etc., attempt to pressure the Soviets into conceding their dissident demands for liberalization. While the left, by appealing to foreign Communists and progressive intellectuals to exert pressure through their contacts and media, hope to harness the Soviet desire for smooth relations with leftist forces around the world to their cause. This latter course has proved to be effective only in respect to the reformist oriented Euro-Communist, and, to a lesser extent, the Albanian and Chinese oriented Parties, and similarly oriented leftist intellectuals who are equally likely to support the appeals of such liberals as Sakharov, as they have been of Marxists such as Grigorenko.

According to Roy Medvedev:

Many dissidents, aware of the limited effect they themselves have had and the absence of any mass movement favouring reform, place their hopes on outside pressure, by which we mean not only the pressure of Western public opinion but also pressure from various government institutions, for example, the US Congress and the White House.<sup>48</sup>

Knowing that there is considerable anti-Communist sentiment in the West, the dissidents have, for the most part, elected to feed to it the information it wants to hear about the Soviet Union. Statements by an individual in the Soviet Union can easily become headlines in the world press or exert considerable influence in the US Congress because of the attention afforded to them by anti-Communist sources. The influence of the small number of dissidents in the USSR is thus magnified out of all proportion to their numbers or support in the Soviet Union.

The more leftist of Soviet dissidents, such as Roy Medvedev, oppose the appeals of liberal and reactionary dissidents to the West, which are designed to undermine detente. In criticizing dissidents such as Sakharov, he has argued:



Calls are made for an end to trade between the West and the USSR, for boycotting all forms of scientific and cultural exchange, and for non-participation in the 1980 Olympics in Moscow. Some Soviet emigrés, along with certain Western politicians, have even suggested suspension of the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT)'

To accept these proposals would be to open a new round in the Cold War between East and West, which would do appreciable harm not only to the East, but to the West as well, and would lead to results directly opposite to those intended.<sup>49</sup>

## Sanctions against Dissidents

As Soviet society became increasingly stable, legitimate and secure in the mid-1950s, there was a radical decrease in coercion as an instrument for dealing with dissidence. There has been a corresponding increase in the use of persuasion together with a long-term growth in tolerance of divergence viewpoints.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, crimes are fairly well defined, and typically, many warnings are given before prosecution for dissident activities, and penalties are fairly well graded according to the offence. Dissidents thus know reasonably well what will be the consequences of their activities.<sup>51</sup>

While, prior to the criminal law reform in the 1950s, many forms of oppositional activity ('counter revolutionary activities') were punishable by death, such draconian penal practices were abandoned in the mid-1950s. At that time, too, there was a drastic reduction in the use of labour camps and other forms of detainment and police harassment.<sup>52</sup> Article 3 of the 1960 Russian Republican Criminal Code provides that no person could be punished unless they committed a crime in law.<sup>53</sup> Since the 1950s – contrary to what often happened in the 1930s and 1940s – such legal provisions have been fairly strictly adhered to in practice.

Article 70 of the 1960 Criminal Code of the Russian Republic which prohibits 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda', has been one of the principle articles under which dissidents have been arrested and sentenced. In 1966, a further article was added to the Legal Code which, unlike Article 70, did not assume subversive intent, but merely deliberate propagation of slanders against the Soviet system. Since 1966 this Article has also been widely invoked against dissidents. Amnesty International has found that in the late 1970s there were fewer prosecutions under 'the anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda' statute, and more under the less stringent statute against 'dissemination of fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system'.<sup>54</sup>

Soviet practice is to warn those who engage in dissident activities a number of times before bringing criminal charges against them. To quote Hough and Fainsod:

In practice, the post-Stalin regimes generally have instituted legal



proceedings only as a last resort, preferring to use a number of lesser penalties as warnings.

Dissidents report repeated visits by the police before any action is taken, visits in which the agents attempt to persuade them that they are mistaken and that their speech has unhealthy consequences.

If the warnings are not heeded, the sanctions can be progressively tightened; first, denial of permission to travel abroad, reduced size in the edition of a book or postponement of its publication, loss of an administrative post or the possibility of one; then rejection of manuscripts, secret police searches of apartments. If the dissident abandons his political activity, he generally is permitted to resume a normal life.<sup>55</sup>

There are a wide range of sanctions against dissident activists, of which only the most harsh is actual imprisonment in labour camps. In the 1960s and 1970s about 15 dissidents a year were judged to be insane (schizophrenics) and committed, usually for relatively short terms, to mental institutions. From time to time prominent dissidents like Solzhenitsyn are either expelled from the country or deprived of citizenship and the right to return when abroad. People in highly paid and high prestige professional jobs and other positions of responsibility (officers in the military, chairman of collective farms, research scientists with military clearance, etc.) are sometimes deprived of their professional positions and required to take jobs as menial labourers.<sup>56</sup> Roy Medvedev has argued:

As a rule Soviet dissidents are not allowed to pursue their intellectual profession, but they can work as simple labourers or clerks or ordinary assistants in the sciences. Some are offered jobs in libraries or archives of secondary importance. . . .

They have a rough time, of course. Some of them work privately at bookbinding, restoring furniture, doing things like that. . . . But we must remember one thing: that in my country everything of prime necessity, like housing, transportation, bread, milk, and so forth is extremely cheap. And that's an advantage not to be under-estimated.<sup>57</sup>

Dissidents, like all Soviet citizens, are subject to the 'anti-social parasite' laws which forbid making a living from such activities as collecting rents, profits, blackmarketing, etc. Thus, dissident ex-professionals in secure jobs are immune from prosecution under this legislation since they are working. Some dissidents, however, refuse to take regular employment and, as a result, have been tried and sentenced to a year in a labour camp under the social parasite laws.<sup>58</sup> However, some dissidents without regular employment live from money sent from the West by friends and relatives, and foreign book royalties (e.g. Roy Medvedev) and are not prosecuted under such laws.<sup>59</sup> University students who engage in dissident activities are liable to expulsion and consequently exclusion from privileged, professional careers.



Other sanctions, more common than incarceration or loss of professional jobs, include expulsion from the Communist Party, expulsion from one's professional union (with the subsequent loss of fringe benefits, but not deprivation of the right to practise one's profession), search of homes, seizure of personal papers and books, police interrogation, surveillance of telephones and mail, warnings from the government, and public attacks in the media as well as personal abuse by neighbours and work-mates.<sup>60</sup> Such relatively mild sanctions, together with measures to tighten party discipline, mobilize party members and supporters, tighten control over professional unions, and intensify political education,<sup>61</sup> have proved to be rather effective in limiting the size of the dissident movement.\*

The corrective labour camps for political prisoners received considerable notoriety owing to their generally brutal conditions during 1937-53, a period of exceptional crisis and paranoia as well as of desperate need for economic construction and reconstruction. It must be emphasized that the harsh regimes in these camps, from which many political opponents of the regime never returned, was unique to that period. Conditions were considerably more humane in the pre-1937 period and became so once again in the post-1953 era. Solzhenitsyn's influential exposés (which considerably exaggerate the very real abuses and brutalities of this period) are historically specific.

Sentencing political dissidents to corrective labour camps is regarded as a process of re-education and therapy, rather than as punishment, similar to the process of sending cadres to work on communes during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The regime in the re-educative labour camps is actually less rigorous than in criminal prisons. Corrective labour camp inmates who violate regulations can be sent for a year or two to a regular criminal prison (where the inmates do not work) as punishment. Zhores Medvedev states that:

The locations and conditions of the camps have altered greatly in the past twenty-five years. . . . Today, many of these camps in the Far North have disappeared: the Siberian camps are generally reserved for repeated professional criminals who are regarded as very dangerous – organizers of armed robberies, for example. For ordinary crimes or political offences, people are sent to camps in their local regions. . . . They are organized around one or other industrial complex, and perform economic functions. . . . The prisoners work there as labourers. Technically, they receive a wage, from which is deducted the cost of the upkeep of their guards, so that the system is economically self-sufficient. . . . There is no longer widespread hunger in them; but food

\* It should be noted that the same sanctions were successfully applied by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in the late 1940s and early 1950s to virtually extinguish the pro-Soviet 'dissident movement' in the USA (see chapter 6).



rations are not generous and can be reduced in the isolators within the camps for violation of discipline.<sup>62</sup>

Dissidents are also often sentenced to *internal* exile, which normally means living and working in a peasant village, or a state or collective farm for a set period. There is little physical maltreatment of prisoners in the USSR. In its 1974 *Report on Torture*, Amnesty International noted:

Though prison conditions and the rights of the prisoners detained on political charges in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union may still be in many cases unsatisfactory, torture as a government-sanctioned, Stalinist practice has ceased. With a few exceptions . . . no reports on the use of torture in Eastern Europe have been reaching the outside world in the past decade.<sup>63</sup>

Throughout the 1970s the Soviet government increasingly employed exile from the USSR (both voluntary and forced emigration) instead of incarceration, as a punishment for dissidents. About half of the prominent dissidents of the 1960s were either allowed or forced to emigrate in the 1970s. According to Zhores Medvedev (who himself was forced to emigrate to the United Kingdom), ' . . . some 400-500 politically active people have left Russia. Today more or less any dissident can emigrate if they want. . . . ' <sup>64</sup>

## **Dissidents Categorized as Schizophrenic**

In the mid-1950s there was an intense debate within Soviet psychiatric circles regarding the definition of schizophrenia. The result of this debate was the triumph of an expanded definition, defended by Professor Andrei Snezhnevsky\* and other leading Soviet psychiatrists, including Dr Georgy Morozov, Professor Ruben Nadzharov and Professor Daniel Lunts. This expanded concept has permitted certain forms of dissent to be viewed as a symptom of severe mental illness, and some dissidents, considered not to be morally responsible for their actions, thus committed to mental institutions.<sup>65</sup>

According to the hegemonic Soviet conception, schizophrenia has three different forms, of which one, the 'continuous form', accounts for 25-30% of all schizophrenias diagnosed. 'Continuous' schizophrenia is characterized as follows: first, subtle personality changes occur – withdrawal, apathy and diminished interests; next follows the development of psychotic (or 'positive') symptoms, such as delusions and hallucinations. The continuous

\* Director of the Institute of Psychiatry of the Academy of Medical Sciences and editor of the Korsakov Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry during the 1970s.



form of schizophrenia has two sub-types defined by the rate of progression of the disease: (1) malignant (rapid) and (2) mild (sluggish). Symptoms in the malignant form are obvious and severe. In the mild form, patients retain much of their ability to function in society, but manifest neurotic-type symptoms, with such features as obsessions, hypochondria, hysterical psychopathy and paranoia. Those dissidents categorized as insane and committed to mental institutions are normally diagnosed as having the 'sluggish' variety of continuous schizophrenia, in which the disease is typically manifested in paranoid symptoms of over-evaluation of one's own importance, often exhibiting grandiose ideas of reforming the world.<sup>61</sup> Common in commitment reports are phrases such as 'paranoid reformist delusional ideas', 'paranoid delusions of reforming society', 'over-estimation of his own personality', 'over-inflation of his capabilities'.<sup>67</sup>

A single psychiatrist can initiate civil commitment proceedings against a person suspected of mental illness. Once an individual is admitted to a psychiatric institution he or she must be examined by a three-member panel of psychiatrists within 24 hours; this panel is responsible for deciding on the appropriateness of commitment and the need for compulsory treatment. In the case of dissidents who have violated Soviet laws, the evaluations of expert psychiatrists are subject to judicial review.

Dissidents who are declared to be not responsible for their actions are typically committed for an indefinite period of compulsory treatment at a mental institution. In recent years periods of commitment have tended to be relatively short. Patients in a psychiatric hospital are examined at six-month intervals by a commission of psychiatrists who report to the courts. Upon release from the hospital, patients are required to register at their local psychiatric clinic and to be supervised on an out-patient basis. After release, depending on the degree to which the psychiatrists, in consultation with the police, think the dissident remains a 'social danger', he/she may be subject to police surveillance. Sometimes, released dissidents who are regarded as 'socially dangerous' may be temporarily recommitted for a few weeks, or required to travel out of town on major holidays or during visits by foreign statesmen.<sup>68</sup>

The Soviet categorization of relatively few dissidents as mentally ill owing to their strong and active opposition to Soviet institutions, would appear to be an example of the general phenomena emphasized by Thomas Szasz in his influential book, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1961). Szasz suggests that the diagnosis of 'mental illness' by Western upper middle-class psychiatrists in people of very different class and ethnic backgrounds reflects more the lack of understanding of such people than any actual mental disorder. Thus we would expect that wherever there is a high level of consensus or very strong feelings about what is 'proper' or 'true' the ability to understand people who fundamentally disagree is reduced, and hence the likelihood of dismissing them as 'crazy' is enhanced.

Indeed, in times when, and in circles where US patriotism is very high, those who reject such values and sympathize with Communism or other



'deviant' movements have also been regarded as 'crazy'. US pilots in the Indo-China War who refused to fly bombing missions because of their political objections to the indiscriminate devastation they were causing were committed to mental institutions. One such case involved Charles Clements who, in April 1970, told his superior officers that he would fly no more missions. Failing to convince him that he should resume his flights, they had him confined to a psychiatric hospital for several months, and eventually gave him a psychiatric-based discharge.\* It is interesting to note that after his discharge Clements earned degrees as a doctor of medicine and a master in public health. In 1982 Clements (as apparent further evidence of his 'insanity') spent a year as a doctor serving with the guerrillas in El Salvador.<sup>69</sup>

## Numbers of Dissidents Confined

Both the few dissidents and the relatively high degree of tolerance of dissident activity in the Soviet Union is manifested in the small number of people who, in the last two decades (that is, since reliable information on the total numbers of detainees has become readily available in the West) have been detained for any form of dissident activities. *Maximum* estimates of political prisoners in the USSR supplied by dissident sources and endorsed by anti-Soviet opinion in the West in the late 1970s ranged from about 2,000 to 10,000. Counts of those confirmed to be political prisoners (broadly defined) average around Amnesty International's figure of 350-400. In 1978 Amnesty International, which gives disproportionate and minute attention to dissidents of all types in the Soviet Union had 350 individuals either adopted as 'political prisoners' or under investigation. This total includes inmates of mental institutions, those sentenced to exile, and those undergoing corrective labour without imprisonment.<sup>70</sup> In April 1980 Amnesty International stated that in the previous four years the Soviets had imprisoned or restricted more than 400 dissidents (including at least 100 in psychiatric hospitals).<sup>71</sup>

According to Bloch, a careful analyst deeply sympathetic to the dissidents, between 1962 and 1977 a total of approximately 600 individuals (about 40 a year) were sentenced to labour camps for one or another type of dissident activity. Bloch's total includes not only 'political' dissidents, but also those confined for nationalist agitation and active religious propaganda, and for organizing in support of easier emigration and for trying to emigrate illegally.<sup>72</sup> According to Hough and Fainsod, 'All in all, according to the most careful Western estimate, approximately 670 persons were sentenced

\* Explaining why he accepted the psychiatric-based discharge, Clements stated: 'I took the craziness they were labelling me with rather than the craziness of that war. The real crazy thing was that I was very loyal.' (*New York Times*, 16 March 1983).



on political grounds between 1960 and 1971.'<sup>73</sup> The US Congress Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe (which monitors compliance with the 1975 Helsinki accords) reported that approximately 560 dissidents were arrested between June 1975 and 1 May 1980 (about 110 a year).<sup>74</sup>

According to Yelena Bonner (wife of Andrei Sakharov) in 1981 there were approximately 400 political prisoners (broadly defined) in the USSR. According to Bonner, these consisted of 200 'religious dissidents', 110 'nationalists or persons arrested for asking to emigrate' and 90 'human rights dissidents'.<sup>75</sup>

Estimates of the number of those confined for political reasons sometimes range as high as 10,000. Such figures are not, however, based on actual counts or careful projections as are the figures reported above. For example the CIA guess as to the number of 'political prisoners' in the USSR is 10,000 people.<sup>76</sup>

Probably the actual number of political prisoners is somewhat greater than either the Amnesty International, Bonner or Bloch's counts, since although these are based on a reasonably extensive network of dissident sympathizers who monitor trials and places of internment and have wide contacts among political dissidents, they probably miss out some people, especially isolated individuals tried in small towns or sentenced to smaller, more obscure prisons or labour camps. Conversely, the 10,000 estimate by anti-Soviet groups with an interest in exaggerating the extent of political repression must be generally discounted, especially as it is a self-admittedly unsubstantiated *guess*, not based on analytical projections from known cases. Possibly a reasonable estimate of the number of political detentions in the 1975 to 1980 period is likely to be something less than 150 a year, and, in 1980, the number of confined political prisoners (broadly defined) is approximately 500. Both these figures are liberal estimates, and include the broadest possible definition both of *political* prisoners (those sentenced under Articles 70 and 190-1 of the Criminal Code, plus those sentenced for religious propaganda, those arrested while trying to illegally emigrate, etc.), and *prisoners* (those in labour camps, actual prisons, exile, under house arrest, etc.).

Between 1962 and 1967, approximately 210 individuals (around 15 a year) were known to have been confined in mental institutions, having been adjudged as legally schizophrenic owing to dissident activities (broadly defined). Approximately 115 of these were confined for 'political' reasons, being general protesters. The remainder were committed because of nationalist-separatist agitation, religious agitation, or campaigning for, or actually attempting to, illegally emigrate.<sup>77</sup>

## Political Tendencies of Dissident Activists

Three fundamentally different tendencies may be identified among political dissident activists in the USSR. (1) the authoritarian and traditionalist right,



who reject both Communism and Western parliamentary forms in favour of a restoration of something approaching Czarist authoritarian institutions purged of Western 'cosmopolitan' influences of either the Marxist or liberal varieties; (2) the non-Marxist social democrats or 'liberals' who campaign for the development of Western-style political institutions and formal liberties; and (3) Marxists (both revolutionary and Euro-Communists) who maintain that current Soviet policies are a distortion of true socialism. This latter group is the weakest and in good part has converged with the liberals; most prominent dissidents subscribe to one or other of the first two. Given the isolation from the masses of the Soviet people of all three types of dissidents, their small number, and their common interest in protecting each other and securing support in the West, they frequently collaborate with each other, despite their different visions of the desirable future course of Soviet society, at least in so far as supporting the rights of each to exist, and minimizing state interference in their activities.

### **The Liberals**

Liberals tend to envisage a convergence of Western parliamentary capitalism and Soviet socialism toward a parliamentary social democracy through a more or less gradual process of evolution (that is, without an armed overthrow of the Soviet state). They are committed to the development of a political pluralist system without restraints on formal freedoms of expression and organization, a system which operates according to the established traditions of the 'rule of law'.<sup>78</sup> They also champion the rights of religious groups to greater autonomy and freedom to proselytize, the rights of Jews and others to freely emigrate, and the rights of minority nationalities, such as the Crimean Tartars, to return en masse to the Crimea. They were also highly critical of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. But perhaps their central focus is on securing and broadening formal freedoms within the Soviet Union.

In the late 1970s, the most prominent dissident in the Soviet Union was a leading nuclear physicist, Andrei Sakharov. Like Solzhenitsyn he has never been imprisoned for his long term and multifaceted dissident activities, although he was exiled to Gorky in 1980. A member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who played a key role in the development of Soviet nuclear weapons, Sakharov became the leading liberal spokesman in the 1970s. While remaining a liberal, and thus not sharing the traditionalist authoritarian analysis of such rightists as Solzhenitsyn, over the years Sakharov has moved to the right. After 1968 he came to reject socialism, even as an ideal, and since 1973 has focused increasingly on attacking detente.

In August 1973 (on the fifth anniversary of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia) Sakharov held a press conference in Moscow for Western reporters to denounce detente between the USSR and the USA as undermining the rights of dissidents in the Soviet Union. His statement to the Western press read in part:



*Détente* without democratization, *détente* in which the West in effect accepts the Soviet rules of the game, would be dangerous. It would not really solve any of the world's problems and would simply mean capitulating in the face of real or exaggerated Soviet power. It would mean trading with the Soviet Union, buying its gas and oil, while ignoring all other aspects.<sup>79</sup>

Sakharov went on to support the 'Jackson Amendment' which makes relaxation of US-USSR trade conditional on allowing free emigration from the Soviet Union. At the 1973 press conference he argued that such a step by the US 'looks like a minimum step, which is important not only by itself, but as a symbol of the fact that detente with the Soviet Union does not preclude some kind of control on this country so that it could not become a danger for its neighbours'.<sup>80</sup>

In February 1973, Sakharov was publicly criticized in an article in *Literary Gazeta*, an important Soviet paper, which attacked him for his views;<sup>81</sup> following his August 1973 statement to the Western press, however, he came under much heavier criticism in the Soviet media. The world-wide attention his statement received, and the Soviet press campaign against him, resulted in Sakharov granting numerous telephone interviews to the Western media and Western correspondents.<sup>82</sup>

In the late 1970s, just before his enforced exile to Gorky, Sakharov publicly supported the US in the Vietnam War, arguing that they could have done more to defeat the National Liberation Movement in that country:

I believe that with greater determination and persistence on the part of America in the military and especially the political sphere tragic developments could have been avoided. Political pressure could have been put on the USSR not to supply arms to North Vietnam, a strong expeditionary force could have been sent there at the right time, the UN could have been brought in, more effective economic aid could have been made available and other Asian and European countries could have been involved; all these things could have so influenced events as to avert the war with its horrific consequences for both sides. . . . But even when the war had reached a state of deadlock, a combination of diplomatic and determined military effort, if explained to the American people and the rest of the world, could have stabilised the situation.<sup>83</sup>

Unabashedly pro-American attitudes are common among liberal dissidents. For example, Anatoly Radygin, a leading émigré, when asked how he saw his future, answered:

I picture it in America. I've always felt myself an American. I'm glad I went to Israel first. Had I not done that I would have never forgiven myself that I wasn't there during the Yom Kippur war. I had to come



here to find out where I really belong. When I was trying to escape I was thinking of eventually reaching the States. My ideal is still the American tolerance, the American Constitution, and that is why I, an atheist and a hater of all slogans, began and ended each day in prison with a prayer, 'America, God bless thee from ocean to ocean'.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Traditionalist Right**

The dissident right, the most prominent individual representative of which, Alexander Solzhenitsyn (who was expelled from the USSR in 1974), advocates the revival of traditional Russian institutions and the purging of both socialist and Western influence from Russian society. For the most part it bemoans the secularization that has occurred in European society since the Renaissance and seeks the reconstitution of a new, ascetic, religious civilization governed by a corporate state and inspired by social Christian ideology, probably through a Russian Orthodox renaissance. Russian Orthodoxy is generally seen as the instrument for the resurrection of the world, while Russia is seen as having the mission of world salvation. This chauvinist Russian position advocates the destruction of the USSR and the creation of an authoritarian unitary state.<sup>85</sup>

As do most of the traditionalist rightists, Solzhenitsyn speaks of the 'many sided cul-de-sac of Western civilization', of 'the ruinous path of Western civilization'.<sup>86</sup> By no means does he hope for or advocate either an adoption of Western parliamentary democratic forms or a convergence between the two systems. His model is a traditional authoritarian regime of the right, 'enlightened authoritarianism' in contrast to 'Communist despotism'. In his letter to the Soviet leaders he argues, 'Thus, perhaps we should recognize that for Russia this path [the struggle against authoritarianism] was mistaken and premature? Perhaps, in the foreseeable future, whether we want that or not, Russia is nevertheless destined to have an authoritarian system? Perhaps it is only ready for this?'<sup>87</sup>

Economic, scientific and technical progress made by humankind in the 19th and 20th Centuries is regarded by Solzhenitsyn as 'an insane, ill-considered, furious dash into a blind alley'. He adds that 'Economic growth is not only unnecessary but ruinous'.<sup>88</sup>

Solzhenitsyn's politics are those of the extreme right in the West. He is opposed to detente, to wars of national liberation, to multiparty parliamentary forms. He advocates an active and aggressive Western offensive against the Soviet Union and the abandonment of detente. He criticizes Western liberals for their 'evenhandedness' in condemning both the Greek military dictatorship and other rightist anti-Communist military regimes *and* Soviet leaders, as if the crimes of anti-Communists were of the same magnitude as those of Soviet leaders. He argues that anti-Communist authoritarianism is necessary to contain Communism.<sup>89</sup> He also strongly criticizes the 'avaricious leaders' of non-aligned nations, and the 'apologists for bloody "national liberation wars"' for not understanding the dangers of Communism.<sup>90</sup>



### **Marxist and Working-Class Dissidents**

Only a relatively small handful of prominent dissidents in the last generation have argued from a more or less revolutionary Marxist perspective against what they saw as the Communist Party's deviation from correct socialist policies. The most famous of these has been General Peter Grigorenko; well known, too, have been Ivan Yakhimovich (a former collective farm chairman) and Aleksei Kosterin (a writer).<sup>91</sup> There is also some evidence that leftist circles were formed in a few cities, for example in Ryazan, Saratov and Gorky. Fragmentary evidence describes these groups as reading, and basing themselves on Lenin's *State and Revolution*.<sup>92</sup> None of these, however, seem to have maintained their leftist critique for very long.

In late 1977, a group of 43 workers from different regions and industries announced the formation of an independent 'trade union' dedicated to protesting against violations of their rights to the Western press. The announcement to the Western press that such a group existed resulted in considerable publicity in the West because a group of working-class dissidents, rather than of members of the intelligentsia, was unique. But the highly scattered geographical basis of the group, together with their smallness, suggests that the characterization of themselves as a 'labour union' was designed to appeal to Western sympathies and gather support from outside the Soviet Union. As a result of the adverse, world wide reaction their press conference brought upon the Soviet Union, four of their leaders were arrested and temporarily confined to psychiatric hospitals for examination; three were released after a few days; and another sentenced to one year in a labour camp for 'social parasitism'.<sup>93</sup>

The basic document of the Free Trade Union Association of Workers in the Soviet Union is their Charter, which was published in the West for the first time in the AFLCIO *Free Trade Union News*. It reads very much as if specifically designed for Western ears and contains no mention of socialism. Thus, this group must be categorized with the liberals. Article 9 of the 'charter' which defines the purposes of the association reads in its entirety:

- a. to carry out the obligations reached by collective bargaining;
- b. to induce workers and other employees into joining free trade union associations;
- c. to carry out those decisions of the Association which concern the defence of rights and the seeking of justice;
- d. to educate Association members in the spirit of irreconcilability toward deficiencies, bureaucracy, deception, inefficiency and wastefulness, and a negligent attitude to national wealth.<sup>94</sup>

The Charter defines membership as 'open to any worker or employee whose rights and interests have been unlawfully violated by administrative governmental, Party or judicial agencies'; a definition that makes clear that this association is not a trade union designed to deal collectively with management but a 'human rights' organization designed to protest against alleged



violation of 'rights and interests'. The concluding Article of the charter clearly indicates that this association was formed primarily to appeal to the West, rather than to the organization of Soviet workers:

As soon as the Free Trade Union Association of workers in the Soviet Union will be recognized by the International Labor Organization or by professional trade unions of foreign countries, and after it will have received moral and material support, it will review its Charter, keeping in mind the specific conditions of workers in our country. Such a review will be conducted not earlier than one year after the Association's founding.<sup>95</sup>

To summarize: contrary to prevailing popular opinion in the West, there is, in the Soviet Union, a considerable range of publicly expressed opinions on almost all questions which affect society. Divergent opinions are not only tolerated but actively encouraged by the Party, government and media. Dissident activity is defined in terms of public attacks on the socialist foundations of Soviet society, and generally repressed only when such public attacks are conveyed to the West for use as anti-Communist propaganda. The dissident movement in the late 1970s was very small, at most a few thousand, almost all professional people. Because of the hegemony of Soviet ideology in the Soviet Union (that is, the legitimacy of its socialist institutions), especially among the working people, the dissidents receive a cold response within the USSR. Their appeal is consciously directed to the West, mostly to anti-Socialist forces who not only broadcast their statements back to the Soviet Union but, more importantly, use them in their general campaign against the Soviet Union and the expansion of socialism. The majority of active dissidents appear to have no qualms about the use of their activities to undermine SALT, detente, national liberation movements in Indo-China, Africa or Latin America, cultural and scientific exchange between socialist and capitalist countries, the credibility of the socialist alternative in the West, etc., because they are not socialists and have rejected the Communist ideal. Further, the repression of the active dissidents who feed the anti-Socialist forces in the West with information they want to hear is relatively even-handed — even gentle by comparative and historical standards.

In short, it appears that the attention given by the West to the repression of 'human rights' in the USSR is out of all proportion to what is actually occurring there. This suggests that the immense publicity the dissident movement receives in the West must have other causes.

## **Comparisons with the USA**

Close parallels exist between restrictions on formal civil liberties in the US during those periods in which there was a challenge to its hegemonic institutions, and the restrictions on civil liberties in the Soviet Union in the



last generation. Both societies have deported those whom it considers undesirables, and both restrict the entry of foreigners considered to be undesirable, and the right of its citizens to travel overseas, although emigration from the USSR has been more restricted than it has in the US. Both societies have employed police harassment, surveillance, seizure of books, etc., against dissidents. There appears to be no significant difference in this regard between the US response to the Red Scare periods of 1917-23 and 1947-56 and the response to dissident activity in the Soviet Union since the 1950s. Both societies have restricted the circulation of published works and the expression of subversive ideas in the mass media. The ban on the expression of leftist ideas in American radio, television, films, mass newspapers, etc. in the 1950s was as thorough as the suppression of anti-socialist ideas in the Soviet Union. On the whole, it appears that the level of repression in the Soviet Union in the 1955 to 1980 period was at approximately the same level as in the US during the McCarthy years (1947-56).

Cycles of suppression of civil liberties have occurred throughout US history, corresponding to periods when the dominant institutions, namely, the state and the property of the upper class, have been challenged. When neither of these institutions was specifically endangered, but when mobilization for external wars was considered necessary, civil liberties were also repressed. Usually, a combination of both these factors has precipitated periods of the most intense repression of civil liberties in US history.

Growing repression of the working-class left, which culminated in its virtual destruction during 1917-23, was a rational response of the upper class, and the US state that it dominated, to contain what could have become (as it did in most of the rest of the Western world) a real threat to private property in the means of production. The need to mobilize the American people behind a 'Crusade against Communism' in order to stop the rapid advance of world revolution that occurred in the wake of World War II was determinant. Domestic Communists had to be scapegoated, in much the same way that Jews were traditionally scapegoated in central Europe, in order to mobilize support for the upper class and its wars and interventions. It became 'un-American' to oppose higher taxes for the military, or the draft, or US foreign policies.

The periodic Red Scares in the US over the last 100 years have served to effectively increase the identification of the American people with the traditional capitalist values of free enterprise and individual mobility, as well as to discredit all forms of socialism and even progressivism as 'un-American'. Socialism has been identified as a 'foreign plot' and identified with the 'horrors' of the Soviet Union. Thus, the legitimacy of the domination of corporate property has been considerably enhanced concomitantly with the popular discrediting of fairly widespread anti-capitalist sentiments among both farmers and working people in the US. The suppression of the civil liberties of Communists, Socialists, and 'Wobblies' has thus proved to be a most rational course of action on the part of the US ruling class.

Both the Soviet Union and the US have most strongly repressed those who



have identified with the other. In both cases, Identification with the foremost foreign opponent seems to provoke outrage rooted in a sense of violation of the patriotic cause, as well as being invoked to mobilize people behind the 'national interest'.

## Notes

1. Rotberg, 1972, pp. 140, 171.
2. Ibid., p. 328.
3. Saunders, 1974, p. 39; Tokes, 1975, p. 12.
4. Tokes, 1975, pp. 22-25.
5. R. Medvedev, 1980, p. 68.
6. Ibid., pp. 137, 147.
7. Z. Medvedev, 1981, p. viii.
8. Skilling, 1971.
9. Hough and Fainsod, 1979, pp. 287-91.
10. Ibid., p. 289.
11. Ibid., p. 287.
12. Kolkowicz, 1971, ch. 5; Osborn, 1970, ch. 4; Simmons, 1971, ch. 8; Gregory and Stuart, 1974, ch. 10; Sherman, 1969, ch. 11; Skilling, 1971; Kelley, 1976; Yanowitch, 1977.
13. Griffiths, 1971.
14. Hopkins, 1970.
15. Osborn, 1970.
16. Z. Medvedev, 1981, p. viii.
17. Hopkins, 1970, pp. 302-11; Skilling, 1971, pp. 43-4.
18. Hopkins, 1970, pp. 303-4.
19. Skillings, 1971; Judy, 1971; Barry and Berman, 1971.
20. Hopkins, 1970, ch. 1; Hough and Fainsod, 1979, pp. 291-4.
21. Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 291.
22. Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 293.
23. Ibid., p. 293-4.
24. See for example, R. Medvedev, 1980, p. 45; and Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 281.
25. Bloch, 1977, p. 103.
26. Ibid.
27. Tokes, 1975, pp. 123-4.
28. R. Medvedev, 1980.
29. Tokes, 1975, pp. 40-1.
30. Nove, 1975; White, 1974.
31. R. Medvedev, 1980, p. 51.
32. Z. Medvedev, 1981, pp. viii, ix.
33. Tokes, 1975, p. 131.
34. Kirk, 1975, p. 198.
35. R. Medvedev, 1980, p. 8.
36. Tokes, 1975, p. 125.
37. Ibid., pp. 122-3.
38. Ebenstad, 1981, p. 28.



39. Tokes, 1975, p. 98; Saunders, 1974, p. 43.
40. White, 1974; Lane, 1976, p. 115.
41. Tokes, 1975, pp. 107-8.
42. Ibid., pp. 266-7.
43. Ibid., pp. 265-6.
44. Ibid., p. 106.
45. Ibid., pp. 106, 109.
46. Ibid., p. 24.
47. R. Medvedev, 1980, p. 11.
48. Ibid., p. 125.
49. Ibid., 1980, pp. 125-6.
50. Tokes, 1975, p. 54.
51. Ibid., pp. 35-6.
52. Ibid., p. 60.
53. Ibid.
54. Amnesty International, 1977, p. 278.
55. Hough and Fainsod, 1979, pp. 281-2.
56. Tokes, 1975, ch. 1.
57. R. Medvedev, 1980, pp. 19, 22.
58. Amnesty International, 1979, p. 240.
59. R. Medvedev, 1980, p. 17.
60. Tokes, 1975, p. 66; R. Medvedev, 1980, pp. 17, 141.
61. Tokes, 1975, p. 62.
62. Z. Medvedev, 1979, p. 22.
63. Cited in Chomsky and Herman, 1979, p. 8.
64. Z. Medvedev, 1979, p. 24.
65. Bloch, 1977, pp. 220-1.
66. Ibid., pp. 246-7.
67. Ibid., p. 251.
68. Ibid., pp. 104-5.
69. See the *New York Times*, 16 March 1983.
70. Amnesty International, 1978, p. 244.
71. *New York Times*, 30 April 1980, p. 6.
72. Bloch, 1977, p. 274.
73. Hough and Fainsod, 1979, p. 282.
74. *New York Times*, 12 May 1980.
75. Scherer (ed.), 1982, ch. 9, p. 371.
76. See *New York Times*, 7 November 1982, p. 3.
77. Bloch, 1977, pp. 248-64; see also Amnesty International, 1978, p. 242.
78. Tokes, 1975, p. 99; Saunders, 1974, p. 413.
79. Tokes, 1975, pp. 386-7.
80. Ibid., p. 387.
81. Ibid., pp. 389-90.
82. Ibid., pp. 404-5.
83. A. Sakharov in R. Medvedev, 1981, p. 292.
84. Kirk, 1975, p. 27.
85. Saunders, 1974, p. 425.
86. Yanov, 1978, p. 91.
87. Ibid.
88. Z. Medvedev, 1979, p. 71.



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89. Tokes, 1975, p. 26.
90. Ibid., p. 25.
91. Saunders, 1974, p. 42.
92. Ibid., p. 415.
93. Amnesty International, 1978, pp. 243-4.
94. *Freedom at Issue*, No. 47, p. 21.
95. Ibid.



## 9. Conclusion

The preceding chapters have examined the level of civil rights for national minorities and women in the USA and the USSR, and the differential level of economic rights (including both workers' job rights and social and economic security), and level of formal civil liberties (especially advocacy rights) in the two countries. In this chapter the results of the preceding chapters are briefly summarized and their significance drawn out. A general theory of the level of tolerance/repression in any society is developed and the class basis of civil liberties elaborated. The systematic uses of 'disinformation', regarding the level of rights and freedoms for working people in the socialist countries, by those forces in the West concerned to discourage the socialist and national liberation movements will be examined. Finally, the tendencies in the various types of rights both in the capitalist and socialist countries will be examined and some speculations made about the future of freedom in both types of country.

### Summary

In Chapter 2 it was seen that the relations between the Asian (and traditionally Islamic) areas of the USSR and the Slavic areas have lost their former colonial character. Central Asia has rapidly industrialized in the period of Soviet power and the standard of living of its people raised to approximate Southern European levels. This contrasts sharply with the acute differential between the US and Puerto Rico, the colonial character of whose relationship with the US is manifested in a much lower standard of living. Similarly, the very rapid economic progress of Soviet Asian minorities contrasts with the slower progress of Blacks and Latins in the American economy. The vastly improved state of basic industry and consumption is more than matched by that of social welfare and education, which are on virtually an equivalent level in both Soviet Europe and Asia. While Soviet Asians have not yet achieved educational levels on a par with most European nationalities, the gap is rapidly closing. In strong contrast to the US, where a consistent policy of Americanization and Anglification of language has been applied to all minorities (indigenous as well as immigrant) the Soviet Union celebrates



and encourages the development of the languages and cultures of its diverse nationalities, channelling considerable funds into subsidizing complete education systems, books, newspapers and the full range of cultural forms in all the basic languages of the Union. Minorities are, as a rule, proportionately represented in the various political bodies (both Soviets and party bodies) at all levels within their Republics. The fruits of Soviet nationality policy and the guarantee of a high level of civil (or national) rights for its Asian peoples has been manifested in the desuetude of the traditional religious practices of Islam, the lack of a dissident movement among the Asian intelligentsia, and the virtual absence of either anti-Russian, anti-socialist or anti-Soviet feelings among any segment of the Asian population. The Soviet achievement in Central Asia must be ranked among the most important accomplishments of the regime.

Although there are significant nationalist and dissident movements in Estonia, Lithuania and among the Jews, as well as popular anti-Russian feelings in Soviet Georgia, Estonia and Lithuania, Soviet nationality policy for the European minorities in the USSR has, in general, been very successful. The Baltic Republics have the highest living standards in the entire country, and are among the most industrialized and most rapidly industrializing, while their health care and educational institutions are inferior to none within the Union. The level of cultural development of most of the European nationalities, especially those of the Baltic Republics, the Ukrainians, the Armenians and the Georgians is very high, with large numbers of books and newspapers published in all their languages. Further, there are heavily subsidized all-around cultural activities, which celebrate the local culture both in the Republics themselves and throughout the Soviet Union. An extensive examination of the position of the Jews in the Soviet Union shows that the Western attempt to colour the Soviet Union as fundamentally anti-Semitic is baseless. In fact, Soviet Jews were found to be heavily over-represented in both professional life and the Communist Party. No evidence of official anti-Semitism and little evidence of popular anti-Semitism was found.

Along with the achievements of the Soviet system in Central Asia, one of the most prominent achievements of Soviet power has been the rapid and radical transformation of the position of women in society. From being one of the most backward in Europe, as well as in Asia, in these regards, Soviet women are today probably the most advanced of women in any country in their relative position vis-à-vis men, as well as in the availability of socialized child care. The wake of the revolution saw the fundamental transformation of women's legal status and economic role. The Soviet Union was the first country to legalize abortions, develop public child care, bring women into top government jobs, etc. The radical transformation of women's position was most pronounced in the traditionally Islamic areas, where an intense campaign liberated women from extremely repressive conditions. Women's level of education through advanced university degrees is approaching that of men. Women are much more likely to be found in such occupations as engineering, medicine, physics, and the other natural sciences than is the case



in the West; and, although still significantly under-represented, they are much more likely to be found in administrative positions than they are in the West. Few women have yet achieved top levels in government or the Party, but large and growing numbers of women are to be found in lower and middle level government and Party positions. Considerable progress is being made in minimizing the time women spend in housework and child care, as well as in persuading men to share in these tasks. In general, radical improvements in women's position have taken place, but problems remain, especially the lack of women in top political positions.

As one would expect from a Socialist revolution, economic rights (both property and social security rights) for working people have been radically improved. The economic rights of the Soviet people are impressive by Western standards (especially in comparison either to countries at a similar level of economic development or to the USA). The Soviet standard of living has improved considerably since 1955, in sharp contrast to the US, where working-class take-home pay declined between 1965 and 1982. Extensive subsidies for housing, basic food stuffs, child care, and transportation, together with free education and medicine are major benefits of the Soviet system for working people. A growing proportion of Soviet consumption is in the form of 'the social wage', that is, goods distributed on the basis of need, rather than on the basis of labour; that is, by the Communist rather than the Socialist principle of distributive justice. The Soviet retirement and disability system (especially for non-job related disabilities) is generous by US standards, especially taking into consideration the heavily subsidized basics of life.

The strongest contrast between the USA and the USSR is in the area of job rights. Soviet workers have far greater rights in their jobs: both in their right to their particular job (the great difficulty of dismissing a worker); their right to a job in general (freedom from unemployment); and their increasing rights of participation in enterprise management.

When the anti-Soviet forces in the West attack the Soviet Union the cutting edge of their critique is usually on the level of type III civil liberties (advocacy and emigration rights). Since it is difficult to deny the considerable economic progress, the high level of civil rights for women and minorities, and of economic rights for working people, a picture is painted of a qualitative difference between the 'Free World' and 'totalitarian Communism' where the individual allegedly has 'no rights'. A careful comparison of the dissident movement in the USSR and its treatment by the Soviet state (as well as of the vital Soviet public debates on a wide range of questions) with the level of repression of anti-capitalist forces in the West, demonstrates that, in fact, there is no qualitative difference between the two — that is, that the case made in the West that the Soviet Union is qualitatively more repressive of civil liberties than is the capitalist world is without substance. Both the number of dissidents and the number of political prisoners in the Soviet Union is grossly exaggerated by innuendo, just as the wide range of publicly expressed ideas and debates in that country is ignored



in the West. The dissident movement, and political repression in the USSR (at least since the mid-1950s) has largely been a creation of the Western media, rather than an actual phenomenon of any consequence. The level of political repression/tolerance of publicly declared anti-socialist aims and ideas in the Soviet Union in the 1970s was roughly equivalent to the level of political repression/tolerance of anti-capitalist sentiments in the USA in the early 1950s, and *qualitatively* repression is *less* than existed in most of Latin America in the 1970s.

In summary, the Soviet system is distinguished as especially superior to that of the West in the areas of civil rights for minorities and women, in property rights for working people, including participation in economic decision-making, rights to a job, and rights in a job. Given that the USSR is still rather poor, its social security system matches that of any major Western capitalist country, and is clearly superior to that in the US. Concerning advocacy rights, about which those in the West who oppose the Soviet system choose to make comparisons, the reality of effective opposition is not significantly different in the two countries. The high levels of type III civil liberties in the West in the 1950-80 period were historically exceptional and reflect a particularly stable and prosperous phase of capitalist development, rather than any inherent property of capitalism (that is allegedly necessarily tolerant, in contrast to socialism which is allegedly inherently repressive). The intense repression in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s, far from being an inherent characteristic of socialism, was rather a result of the extraordinary crisis in which Soviet society found itself at that time.

An evaluation of the level of rights in the USSR in terms of the criteria of the Marxist-Leninist tradition shows that the USSR has made considerable advances in terms of its own explicitly held theory of right as originally articulated by Marx, Engels and Lenin. In traditional Marxist-Leninist terms the Soviet Union is in a fairly advanced state of full *socialism*, making gradual progress in the transition to Communism. Although it characterizes its state as 'a state of the whole people' this essentially amounts to a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (broadly defined) since the only other classes are the collective farm peasantry (ever smaller in size, and more like state farm workers in their conditions), and the intelligentsia (which, officially, is described as a stratum of the working class). All productive property of consequence has been socialized since the mid-1930s. State owned property co-ordinated through the central plan, and managed, without exploitation, by working people, encompasses most of the economy. Since the 1930s, the principal mode of distribution has been according to labour, although the 'social wage', consisting of basic services, has been growing as a proportion of all consumption, while income differences have been shrinking quite radically (distribution on the basis of need is coming to supplant distribution on the basis of labour contributed). The administrative and technical division of labour is being slowly transcended with increasing automation, increasing skill levels and growing participation in all levels of economic decision making.



The Soviet Union would seem to have achieved the fundamental level of right laid down in the Marxist classics as characteristic of the socialist stage of the post-revolutionary process. The basic 'democratic rights' of social security, education, medical care, the right to work, etc. have long been established, as have basic civil rights for national minorities and women. Obviously, private property in the means of socialized production is denied to individuals, as one would expect in a socialist society. Political participation, including membership in the single (Communist) Party, is open to all. The role of formal political participation in decision-making, as well as the tendency towards decentralization of decision-making, has been significantly increasing.<sup>1</sup> As one would expect from a socialist dictatorship 'of the Proletariat' (or 'of the people') the rights of public advocacy are limited to what is considered not to be destructive of the process of transition to Communism. Basic individual (level I) liberties, such as the right to leave one's job, find a new one, internal migration, free marriage and divorce, reproductive rights, religious belief, privacy, and so on, are, however, secure. Further, level II liberties of due process rights have become secure since the 1950s: predictable and fair treatment by the courts and police is now general. Emigration and international travel have become subject to less restriction as the accomplishments of the Soviet regime's domestic policies, and its high level of legitimacy, have resulted in such factors being less potentially harmful to further Soviet advance; relatively few people actually want to emigrate, and also the skills of the potential emigrés are not as vital as they were. In summary, the level of right in the Soviet Union closely approximates the classical Marxist-Leninist theory of post-revolutionary transformation and rights projected for a society of the Soviet type. By its own criteria the Soviet Union has to be considered successful.

## State Power and Civil Liberty

All states are primarily concerned with self-preservation, as are all dominant propertied classes. These general principles are independent of the mode of production, nature of the dominant class, or form of government. They apply equally to feudal, slave, capitalist and socialist societies; to absolute, and to constitutional monarchies, to military dictatorships, parliamentary democracies, governments based on workers' councils, and party systems, etc. A state may change its form by peaceful methods (for example, from military dictatorship to parliamentary institutions) but power is rarely transferred from one class to another peacefully and *never* transferred from the propertied class to the unpropertied class in a peaceful and non-coercive manner. States, by their very nature, are mechanisms of coercion, existing primarily to enforce particular forms of socio-political conduct upon their people; police, prisons and the army are the very core of the state.

That all states, at all times, will concentrate their powers — police and ideological — upon self-preservation and the preservation of the dominant



institutions of property may, in fact, be postulated as a law. To the extent possible the state will attempt to achieve this goal by engaging the support of those subject to its authority; and to the extent that persuasion fails to achieve this end, coercion will be applied to prevent its opponents from attempting to influence others, and to encourage the repression of such opponents in order to promote national unity and national mobilization. Those in power will endeavour to maintain their position by attempting to neutralize any organizations, individuals and ideologies that threaten their power.

But police power is only one mechanism by which the state controls the people. The 'ideological State Apparatuses', that is, institutions such as schools, patriotic parades, political speeches, military training, the mass media, the churches, etc., convince, invoke and mobilize the people's support of the propertied classes right to property, and hostility towards the enemies of the propertied class and the state both in the form of domestic challenges and foreign interventions and wars. The state that relies primarily on police repression is weak, while that able primarily to rely on generating national, patriotic enthusiasm is strong.

Social controls are essential for a society's survival. A viable society also needs a sufficient degree of consensus, or mutual tolerance, to facilitate the co-existence of people and sub-groups in fundamentally constructive ways. Thus, regardless of their class nature, all societies must take measures to control ideas which are seen as potentially powerful forces disruptive of the harmony necessary for societal survival. Subversive ideas and movements must be contained below the level of potential threat to social order. In capitalist societies, this means containing revolutionary socialist ideas and movements. In socialist societies, pro-capitalist ideas and movements, as well as other ideologies fundamentally disruptive of socialist construction must be contained; this includes suppression of racist, 'elitist' or other anti-democratic ideas which, especially in the period after a socialist revolution, can have a most pernicious effect on various social groups (owing to the legacy of pre-revolutionary ideology) as well as hinder the process of socialist construction. It also means that individualistic, anti-collectivist ideologies which hinder the transformation of human motivation, the project for the creation of new, more caring and co-operative people, must be suppressed.

The denial of public advocacy rights to those opposed to the dominant system of power and property must be considered as 'a continuation of war by other means'. Ideological mobilization and the isolation of ideas and people that would affect popular mobilization negatively are an essential part of modern warfare, which, to be effective, requires massive, enthusiastic participation. Likewise, in the period following civil war or violent revolution, such mobilization and isolation are necessary in order to consolidate the victories and build a new social order — again, independently of the class nature of society. This applies to the post-French Revolutionary period and to the post-Russian Revolutionary period equally.

The rules apply both to mobilization for external war and for revolutionary (or counter-revolutionary) civil war alike; the interests of military victory



require a sufficient degree of popular mobilization, and hence the containment of opposition. Anything less indicates indecisiveness about the goals of the war, and increases the chances of defeat. General Westmoreland, the commander of the US expeditionary force in Vietnam, understood this well. Westmoreland argued that 'Vietnam was the first war ever fought without any censorship. Without censorship, things can get terribly confused in the public mind. Television is an instrument that can paralyze this country.' According to the *New York Times* dispatch 'General Westmoreland said that before the Vietnam War the military censored all news articles from a war zone so that they could not damage the morale of the troops and the public.' He went on, according to *The Times*, to argue: 'The armed forces cannot win wars without public support and thus should control the news media in wartime.'<sup>2</sup>

To show combat troops their opponent's propaganda films, or to present to them a purely neutral and objective appraisal of their opponent's positions, can only raise doubts about the legitimacy of the cause for which they are fighting. To present both sides tends to produce more 'tolerant' people, people less willing to sacrifice, less convinced, less effective troops, people less willing to change. Whether this is bad or good must, of course, be judged on the basis of the relative rightness or wrongness of the causes in contention. To have shown Nazi films to US GIs during World War II, resulting in greater understanding and tolerance for the Nazi cause, or KKK anti-Black films on US television, resulting in increased racism, would clearly be bad *from the point of view* of anti-fascism and anti-racism. Conversely, to have shown Viet Cong films to GIs during the Vietnam War, or films promoting Black-White solidarity would, *from the point of view* of national liberation or anti-racism be good. Tolerance, then, is historically and class specific and must be judged according to its *effects* in retarding or promoting greater *substantive* freedom, i.e. the ability of working people to achieve dignity, a decent standard of living, and control over their lives and environment.

Herbert Marcuse has argued:

Withdrawal of tolerance from regressive movements before they can become active; intolerance even toward thought, opinion, and word, and finally, intolerance in the opposite direction, that is, toward the self-styled conservatives, to the political Right — these anti-democratic notions respond to the actual development of the democratic society which has destroyed the basis for universal tolerance. The conditions under which tolerance can again become a liberating and humanizing force have still to be created. When tolerance mainly serves the protection and preservation of a repressive society, when it serves to neutralize opposition and to render men immune against other and better forms of life, then tolerance has been perverted. And when this perversion starts in the mind of the individual, in his consciousness, his needs, when heteronomous interests occupy him before he can experience his servitude, then the efforts to counteract



his dehumanization must begin at the place of entrance, there where the false consciousness takes form (or rather: is systematically formed) – it must begin with stopping the words and images which feed this consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

Any state, any ruling group, any dominant class, will use coercion, including the suppression of basic civil liberties, to the extent that its ideological hegemony has broken down. Objectively, then, it makes little difference whether compliance with its interests is achieved by willing subordination or by force. The mechanisms of securing ideological hegemony or willing compliance not only accomplish the same purpose as overt repression, but are more effective in that they do not arouse antagonism, but objectively, they are repressive nonetheless. To overwhelm socialist, or other anti-system ideas, by a monopoly of the media, compulsory education, state co-ordinated patriotic campaigns and religious indoctrination all inculcating pro-system ideology, can most effectively produce compliance, especially when combined with isolation, by means of the denial of basic formal liberties, the active opponents of the system, in order to ensure a virtual monopoly of the means of creating ideology.

All societies and all social groups socialize and pressure their members to perceive certain things as desirable and impart certain expectations about the probability and reasonableness of obtaining them. But freedom could in one sense be defined as the ability to get what one wants. Freedom of speech to say publicly whatever one wants; freedom of assembly to gather where and around whatever issues one wants; freedom of movement to travel wherever one wants, etc. If society succeeds in convincing us that we want only what it wants in all these cases, are we then truly more free than an individual who refuses to comply with social mores – assuming in both instances that to speak, assemble, etc. is contrary to social edicts. No, in the last instance the difference must be considered not one of degree of real freedom, but rather one of the *effectiveness* of socialization, social control or ideological hegemony.

If there is formal freedom of expression in any media, but that structural and ideological constraints result in so few people using this freedom that no one pays attention and that it has no effect, what kind of freedom is this? If such freedom was so widely employed and elicited a response such that the ideological hegemony of the dominant group were to break down and the dominant property arrangements were thus threatened, then public advocacy would be repressed. Thus, the mere existence of formal freedom, which if employed effectively would be suppressed, cannot be considered as evidence of real freedom.

To quote Chomsky and Herman:

The beauty of the democratic systems of thought control, as contrasted with their clumsy totalitarian counterparts, is that they operate by subtly establishing on a voluntary basis – aided by the force of nationalism and media control by substantial interests – presuppositions



that set the limits of debate, rather than by imposing beliefs with a bludgeon.

The system of brainwashing under freedom, with mass media voluntary self-censorship in accord with the larger interests of the state, has worked brilliantly. The new propaganda line has been established by endless repetition of the Big Distortions and negligible grant of access to non-establishment points of view; all rendered more effective by the illusion of equal access and the free flow of ideas. US dissenters can produce their Samizdats freely, and stay out of jail, but they do not reach the general public or the Free Press except on an episodic basis.<sup>4</sup>

It can well be argued that the existence of formal freedoms, which are utilized by only an isolated few to challenge the dominant ideology and institutions, actually contribute to real *unfreedom*; that permitting a few people, who have little or no impact, to speak against the system is, in fact, more repressive of real freedom than the denial of that formal right. The existence of a few small newspapers, critical speakers, university professors or very small leftist parties on the ballot, implies that formal freedom is real, that people are free to choose, and, they *do*, in fact, choose freely to accept the system. The repression of such formal freedom shows that the people are not free, and that those in power are afraid of critical ideas. To repress alternative ideas can both make them more attractive and generate sympathy for them, as well as strengthen the resolve of those who are repressed — if they feel strongly enough about their ideas. Such 'repressive tolerance' is an important mechanism whereby people in the West are convinced that they are free, and that those in the socialist countries are not. The focus on formal liberties, rather than on either substantive liberties, or on the degree to which people actually use, or are permitted to use, their formal freedom, the range of popular debate or the effect of the exercise of formal freedom, thus comes to serve the capitalist system, which since around 1950 has been very stable in the West, and very effective in preserving its ideological hegemony.

Outside the approximately dozen wealthiest countries, however, the capitalist world cannot afford the luxury of 'repressive tolerance'. There the most brutal suppression of civil liberties is necessary in order to preserve the capitalist system, just as the most brutal suppression of civil liberties was necessary in the inter-war period, when the ideological hegemony of capitalist rule was no longer effective. The correlation between formal civil liberties/parliamentary forms and capitalism is actually very tenuous. During the 1940–80 period only eight capitalist countries (Australia, the Republic of Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States) maintained a continuous 40 year period of even formal civil liberties/parliamentary forms; and in most of these countries, especially during and after World War II, there has been significant repression of those who tried to exercise their rights of advocacy. In addition, four others (Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium) whose formal civil liberties/parliamentary forms were suspended owing to the Nazi invasion, should be included.



Among more than 100 capitalist societies, these dozen wealthy, socially stable, advanced capitalist countries alone have experienced even that comparatively short period in which their people were permitted to exercise formal liberty of advocacy. This is clear evidence that the right of public advocacy in capitalist economic formations exists only in the absence of any challenge to privilege and property that may be effectively facilitated by the exercise of formal liberties.

In the United States the cycles of tolerance and repression have been directly correlated to the degree of threat presented by movements against privilege and property, either because periods of severe economic or foreign policy crises threatened the hegemony of the capitalist class and/or because radical movements were growing in strength. Many of the peak periods of political repression in the US have been coincidental with times when the working class movement appeared to present a major threat – 1877, 1886, 1894 and 1919 – on each occasion major strikes had called social stability into question. Others coincided with the need to generate patriotic enthusiasm for America's wars: 1775–83; 1861–65; 1917–18; 1940–45; 1950–53; 1968–71. Generally, the intensity of repression has largely been a product of the degree of internal threat *and* the degree of solidarity that needed to be generated for war. Thus the periods of strictest repression were during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and the 1917–23 period when the threat of working class radicalism was the greatest. The intense repression during 1917–19 was a result of the concomitant need to mobilize for war, and the radical threat, a coincidence manifested in the absence of identification with the British-French side in the War by a significant proportion of the US working class born in Central and Eastern Europe, a not inconsequential sector sympathetic to the Bolshevik Revolution.

It is instructive to examine the different state responses to radical leftist and radical rightist movements. Radical rightist movements have been subject to little or no interference except when they have engaged in overt violence, while leftist groups have been regularly and systematically repressed merely for *advocacy* of ideas. Historically, the US has permitted the activities of the KKK and other such racist and anti-socialist groups except when they were directly involved in killing and bombings.\* The repression of leftist opposition to war (the US Revolution aside) has invariably been considerably harsher than similar rightist opposition. Many Confederate sympathizers were gaoled in the North during the Civil War, but few, if any, were executed, and the treatment of the defeated Confederate leaders was exceptionally mild (one execution) by any historical standards. Likewise, although a few Nazis were imprisoned during World War II, German sympathizers were treated very gently in comparison to the treatment of Soviet sympathizers either in the

\* The extent of their suppression even in such instances has, however, normally been far milder than that applied to such groups as the Black Panthers or the IWW when, in fact, the evidence for involvement in similarly violent activities was weaker.



1917-23 or 1948-55 periods. This differential treatment of right and left opponents (with the non-violent right virtually immune to persecution and, even when prosecuted, treated very mildly) stems from the fact that the radical right, unlike the radical left, generally *shares* the politically dominant capitalist class's positive evaluation of private property and class inequality, as well as a negative evaluation of socialism; it does not then present a systematic threat to the dominant system of power and privilege. Thus, a level of violence, talk of violence, opposition to wars, and so on by the radical right similar to that engaged in by the radical left, is normally treated either as an ordinary crime (dealt with on a case by case basis) or, in various degrees, tolerated by state officials sympathetic to their activities, especially when acts of terror against the left are involved. Such radical rightist activities, especially when mobilization for imperialist wars is needed, or working class/minority left threats need to be neutralized, is positively functional for the goals of the state and is often co-ordinated with official state repressive activities; for example, the activities of the American Legion during 1919-23. Fascist groups similarly served the ruling classes of Germany, Italy and the other European countries, both immediately after World War I, and again in the 1930s.

### Factors Determining the Level of the Civil Liberty of Public Advocacy

A considerable number of factors affect the degree to which public advocacy of ideas which oppose the dominant system of property and the state are tolerated or repressed. The two most important of these: (1) the intensity of the threat to dominant property forms, and (2) the extent of the need to mobilize the people for war, have already been treated at length. Other basic factors which affect all forms of societies are: (3) the strength of the ideological hegemony of the dominant class, and (4) the depth of feelings of popular offence at the violation of the symbols of societal solidarity.

The state is less likely to suppress public advocacy of ideas that oppose the system if the vast majority of its people willingly subscribe to the legitimacy of the prevailing property system and, thereby, enhance the security of the propertied class.

The stronger the sentiments of group solidarity — that is, patriotism, nationalism, socialism, religious feeling, and so on — and the deeper the emotional response of a people to the society, then spontaneous anger and outrage is the more readily aroused in the face of public expression of opposition to the fundamental symbols and values of that society. For example, the desecration of sacred objects among deeply religious people; the burning of a flag or substitution of profane words in a national anthem among deeply patriotic people; or stamping on a red banner among deeply socialist people, all tend to evoke the same response of spontaneous anger. Thus at times of the most deeply felt nationalist, religious, or socialist sentiment, the state is more likely to outlaw and actively suppress such public expressions of opposition,



and further to ban mere verbal advocacy which is popularly regarded as profane.<sup>5</sup> This is so, even if there is little or no threat to the dominant institutions. In such cases, the state's response can be seen as an overkill — or even as 'irrational'.

Other factors which are differentially specific to various types of society include: (1) the relative size of the dominant and dominated groups; (2) the desire to transform the character and consciousness of a people, in contrast to merely conserving the status quo; (3) the relative levels of expectations and skills in a repressed, but formerly dominant group, compared to a new dominant group; and (4) the extent of reliance on moral incentives and ideological mobilization, in contrast to economic incentives and physical coercion.

We would expect, other things being equal, that the smaller the group that benefits from the operation of a society, and the larger the group that is potentially mobilizable by a challenge to the prevailing property forms, then the greater the level of repression of the advocacy rights of those who attack the dominant property system. Other things being equal, we would expect that the level of repression will be greater in capitalist or other societies with a relatively small dominant group, than in socialist societies where the vast majority of people benefit from the prevailing property system, and thus the threat to the dominant system of property is necessarily less. Accordingly we find that repression of public advocacy in Latin America, as well as in much of East Asia in the 1970s, was qualitatively greater than that in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, or Cuba.

We would expect that a dominant group interested merely in conserving the status quo, and not in transforming people, concerned rather to demobilize or depoliticize them, in encouraging them to focus on the problems of their daily life, traditional antagonisms, parochial interests, individualist pursuits and so on, can thus, other things being equal, allow a greater degree of tolerance for diverse viewpoints, whose expression, being highly diverse (right, left and centre) makes systematic change in any direction difficult. On the other hand, a regime that is intent upon popular mobilization in order to transform the people, must limit the range of tolerance, in order to ensure the enthusiasm necessary for transformation. Thus, the Jacobin regime during the French Revolution was necessarily more repressive than its Monarchist predecessor, just as the Bolsheviks in the post-revolutionary generation were necessarily more repressive than their Czarist predecessor. Once there is popular acceptance of a new consciousness, a new way of relating and new values, the level of tolerance can increase, but until then, a too wide level of tolerance can only neutralize and undermine the effort to create a new consciousness.

Upper- and middle-class groups which, for a considerable time have been displaced by a popular revolution, continue to have expectations of regaining their positions of power and privilege. Further, the average level of their speaking, writing, organizing, etc. skills is much higher than that of average peasants and workers. Such people, too, have been socialized into the habit of command and have acquired leadership skills, while peasants and workers have



mainly been conditioned for subordinate roles, respect of authority, and so on. Consequently, by using their superior skills and abilities, a traditional élite may more easily rule workers and peasants, than can workers and peasants dominate a former élite. There is, therefore, greater need for stricter repression by a working people's state over the old ruling groups *and* of ideologies which reflect the interests of such groups, than for a traditional élite to restrict the public advocacy of working people and peasants. In classical Marxist terminology a period of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is necessary during which time the previously dominant groups lower their expectations of a counter-revolutionary reversal and come to terms with their situation; and, concomitantly, the working people acquire leadership skills and confidence in their ability to rule. Meanwhile, a new generation is raised, in which propensities to be dominated or to dominate are absent, and which enthusiastically accepts the basic principles of a democratic and co-operative socialist order.

Societies that employ ideological mobilization or moral incentives, rather than relying primarily on economic incentives or force, to ensure that workers produce and the people in general make a positive contribution to society, will probably need to restrict public challenges to ideological mobilization more severely than will societies that place less reliance on moral incentives. The greater the importance of the prevailing ideology to the general system of social control and motivation, the more important that it shall be secured and advanced. The less important is ideological mobilization for a society, the more tolerant it can be of publicly expressed attacks which undermine ideological hegemony. In capitalist societies the fear of unemployment, the attraction of promotions and pay raises, etc., serve to motivate economic performance, and fear of the negative consequences often motivate people to obey the laws. In socialist societies, which guarantee everyone a job, where pay differentials are less, social security is more advanced, and people are mobilized in good part to police and administer themselves, economic incentives and physical constraints are less important. Instead, ideological mobilization, the generation of enthusiasm, what the Cubans call *consciencia* is more central; hence, the fundamental importance of containing threats to the dominant ideology.

In addition to the eight social forces that lead to the limiting of advocacy rights there are also a number of general social forces that lead to the widening of tolerance. First is the positive effect of an exchange of ideas on the development of new, creative and positive solutions to problems facing a society. The greater the restrictions on advocacy, other things being equal, the more likely a society is to stagnate and fail to develop original and useful responses to its problems. The greater the width and depth of expression the greater the chance for innovations to be developed. The greater the suppression of ideas, the greater the intimidation of those who might well have good ideas. The maximal solution to the problem of encouraging creativity in the development of positive solutions to social problems, under conditions where significant restrictions on advocacy are necessary, is to impose broad but clear limits on what is and what is not considered to be destructive, thereby repressing clearly



negative contributions without inhibiting positive diversity. Soviet policy seems to be aimed at achieving this. But the greater a society's need for innovation, the greater is the range of advocacy rights likely to be practised.

A second general force leading to the expansion of civil liberties is the *legitimizing effect* of free expression versus the *delegitimizing effect* of its denial. Those with divergent opinions who are prohibited from expressing them publicly may develop resentment against their society that could well lead to broader and more fundamental opposition. Conversely, those who are enabled to express themselves freely, even if with little effect, are less likely to blame the social institutions for their problems and thus are less likely to become alienated from society. Social stability can be enhanced by allowing people to 'let off steam' that otherwise might prove the more socially dangerous if repressed and thus generate bitterness and resentment; advocacy rights (as well as emigration) perform a 'safety valve' function. Other things being equal, then all societies – to the extent possible – will expand the range of permissible opinions, if only to decrease the potential social discontent consequent upon formal prohibitions on expression.

In the case of minority ruling class societies this is 'repressive tolerance', the latitude for expression of divergent opinions in order to convince people that they are really free when they in fact are not. Socialist countries (for example, China during the Cultural Revolution, or the Soviet Union in the early 1950s) which prescribed excessively narrow limits on freedom of expression – limits subject to sudden change with formerly prohibited opinions becoming acceptable, and vice versa – are likely to generate popular disaffection, cynicism and scepticism about the wisdom of the leaders. A state is wiser to allow as wide a range of opinions as is compatible with socialist construction in order to prevent undermining the credibility of the system by changes in the Party's line. Further, to permit the expression of all ideas, short of challenging the fundamental postulates of socialism, encourages the people's positive creativity and enables the government (and Party) to be more responsive to their needs.

A third force leading to the expansion of advocacy rights is the degree of structural diversity of the dominant groups. The more economically diverse the ruling group, the more necessary is free debate and expression among them in order for compromises to be worked out, and to create solidarity and avoid a sense of alienation or oppression within any sub-group. Thus within class societies, the most developed parliamentary forms and civil liberties for the propertied classes have occurred in commercial societies in general and in capitalist societies in particular. Ancient Athens, the mediaeval city states, Holland, England, etc., were the cradles both of civil liberties and modern parliamentary forms (for the propertied classes). The modern idea of formal freedom of assembly, speech, demonstration, writing and religion (as well as of emigration) originated in the most commercial of Western societies. The upper class in such societies was considerably more diverse than that in feudal or slave societies where the interests of all members of the upper class tended to be pretty much the same, thus requiring much less



divergent expression and compromise to achieve common policies and maintain stability. Commercial societies consist of a wide range of financiers, industrialists, producers of raw materials, transport owners, consumer goods capitalists, etc., each with divergent and partially contradictory interests, each generating somewhat different ideologies and ideas. Modern Western tolerance, then, is in good part a product of commercialism (and capitalism), *but* it is tolerance within the limits of what a stable commercial class society requires.

Fourthly, the free expression of opinions provides those in power *élite* or decision-making positions in any society important information about social conditions, especially discontent among the masses of people, information which is largely denied to them to the extent that free expression is repressed. Thus, the broader the range of public expression the more accurate the information available to a decision-making *élite*, and thus the sounder are its decisions, from its own point of view. In a capitalist or pre-capitalist class society, this means that free expression of ideas serves as a 'barometer of discontent', warning the ruling group that trouble is brewing, and that appropriate reforms or repressive measures should be undertaken in order to prevent the transformation of verbal discontent into more practical opposition. In authentically state socialist societies, this means that the party, government and economic leaders, are better enabled to understand the concerns and problems of the people, the better to modify policies and thus have the state and party better serve the people, correcting abuses, and when necessary, explaining more effectively to the people the need for sacrifices or the cause of difficulties, thus generating greater support and undermining the causes of delegitimization.<sup>6</sup>

The fifth and final factor that affects the degree of tolerance in a society is the ability of the politically dominant group to effectively repress its opponents without precipitating large scale social disorders or otherwise endangering its rule. At times the dominated classes/minority groups in a society have been able to extract significant concessions from the politically dominant groups because of their ability to disrupt society; such concessions typically include freedom to organize parties in radical opposition to the dominant values and maintain media in sharp opposition to the state. In US history, perhaps the clearest example of this was the institutionalization of the Constitution in the late 1780s. Because of widespread discontent with the ability of the loose, post-Revolutionary state to deal with the threats to the dominant propertied interests in the new United States (slave revolts in the South, small farmer revolts in the North, Indians in the West, pirates on the high seas) and advance propertied interests — by protective tariffs, common markets, patent protection, regulation of money, guarantee of debt, isolation of the courts, executive and legislature from popular pressures for egalitarian measures, etc. — a federal Constitution was drafted by representatives of the wealthy, northern merchants and the southern slaveowners. This draft document was submitted to the states for ratification, but failed to achieve a popular majority because of its obvious class bias. In order to gain a majority for ratification in four of the decisive states (including New York, Virginia



and Massachusetts, the three most populous) the designers of the document had to agree to make some significant modifications, namely to add ten *amendments*: the so called Bill of Rights. This 'Bill of Rights' guaranteed to the small farmers the right to assembly, speech, religion, arms, etc; rights which were *not* mentioned in the body of the document. The Bill of Rights was a concession to this class, made necessary by their ability to block the major reorganization of the state in the interests of the wealthy classes that the Constitution represented.<sup>7</sup>

The relatively high degree of tolerance of the left in the 1933-39 period in the US, a period of severe economic crisis which, at other times in the US, and at that time throughout almost all the rest of the world, was associated with severe repression of the left, was a product of the Roosevelt New Deal coalition between progressive capital and the labour movement — within which socialists of various kinds played an important role. It should be noted that in the 1935-39 period the rapidly growing US Communist Party pretty much supported Roosevelt, submerging, meantime, its radical critique of American society. In the period 1941-45, when the Party was allowed to operate freely, it did everything possible to mobilize the US working class behind the War effort. Thus, during 1935-39 and 1941-45 the dominant Marxist movement in the US objectively operated in the interests of capital, both in helping to organize the working class into non-revolutionary unions (a process opposed by the majority of US capital at the time, even though it was in the interests of the capitalist system) and mobilizing for the War; there was, then, no need to repress it. This contrasts sharply with the pre-1935, 1939-41 and post-47 periods when the thrust of the Communist Party was in sharp opposition to the dominant, domestic propertied interests, as well as foreign imperialist wars: consequently, it was sharply repressed. The situation in France during the Popular Front period of 1936-38 was similar to that in the US from 1935-39.

There were similar periods of a high level of tolerance for classes/organizations in opposition to the dominant system of property in Western Europe in the post-World War II years, where the need to stabilize and reindustrialize socially and economically devastated societies required co-operation between anti-Fascist capital and the Marxist parties. In return for their co-operation the organization of the working class was facilitated by the European governments between 1944 and 1947. In the post-1947 period, in return for their absence of support of revolutionary activity, Marxist organizations were tolerated wherever they were strong, in Italy and France, for example. To reconstruct France or Italy without the co-operation of the Communists in the earlier post-War period would have been difficult; an attempt to repress them in the post-1947 years would probably have resulted in civil war. This policy, first of co-operation, then, because of the prolonged period of prosperity after 1947, tolerance/isolation, successfully neutralized the potential revolutionary bite of the Western European Communist movements *without* formal repression. In Greece, however, where the Communists refused to co-operate in reconstruction and instead pursued social revolution,



they were violently repressed.

Thirteen factors, determining the level of limitation/tolerance of public advocacy in a society, are summarized below:

- 1) The greater the domestic threat from any movement that attacks the basic system of property and privilege, the less the tolerance of public advocacy that challenges the system.
- 2) The greater the need to mobilize people for war (especially civil war) or overseas intervention, or the greater the threat from external powers, the less will public advocacy of anti-war ideas be tolerated.
- 3) The less secure the ideological hegemony of the dominant class, the less the willing acceptance of the prevailing property and political arrangements, the less the tolerance of public advocacy of ideas that attack property and the state.
- 4) The greater the popular feelings that the symbols of the society (the flag, patriotic myths, heroes, etc.) are sacrosanct, the greater the sentiments of group solidarity, the greater the emotional enthusiasm, then the lesser the tolerance of public advocacy that attacks or profanes these symbols.
- 5) The fewer the number of people benefiting and the greater the number of people suffering from the operation of a society, the less the tolerance of public advocacy of ideas opposed to the system.
- 6) Regimes which need to dominate former ruling groups with high levels of expectations about returning to power, and high levels of organizational and mobilization skills, are less tolerant of oppositional views than regimes that dominate those with lower levels of expectations and organizational and mobilization skills.
- 7) The more the dominant group of a society is concerned to *change* (as opposed to preserve) popular consciousness and conduct, the less is public advocacy of anti-system ideas tolerated.
- 8) The more a society relies on moral incentives or ideological mobilization (as opposed to economic incentives and physical coercion) to motivate labour and social contributions, the greater the need to secure the dominant ideology, the lesser the tolerance of conflicting ideologies.
- 9) The greater a society's need for innovation, the greater will be the tolerance of ideas that challenge the system; because the lower the level of tolerance, the less likely are useful and original responses to society's problems to develop and stagnation avoided.
- 10) The greater the economic diversity of the ruling group, the greater the need for open debate and free expression of diverse opinions within it to enable compromises to be negotiated and solidarity maintained. Hence, the greater the level of tolerance of diverse opinions within ruling groups, such as in parliamentary forms and formal public advocacy rights developed in the most commercial societies.
- 11) The corollary of the need for decision-makers in any society to be aware of potential social discontent, etc., is social tolerance of freely expressed opinions; that is, the maintenance of public advocacy rights as a 'barometer



of discontent'.

12) The public expression of ideas which fail to have a significant social effect serves as a 'safety-valve' for discontent and to *legitimate* the existing power structure, since such tolerance seems to be 'proof' of freedom. This process has been called 'repressive tolerance' since such formal freedom, in fact, weakens substantive freedom. To formally prohibit the expression of ideas generates potentially dangerous resentments that 'freedom' of expression, even if ineffectual, successfully neutralizes.

For the reasons outlined in theses (11) and (12) under stable conditions societies will tend to expand the range of tolerated opinions in order to strengthen the existing power structure.

13) The greater the danger that repression may precipitate large scale social disorder, the greater will be the level of tolerance for those fundamentally opposed to the system to express their ideas publicly.

The changes over time in the degree of formal advocacy rights in a given society, or the variation among societies of a given type, is a product of the changes in the relative strength of the above 13 factors. The degree of tolerance and repression then has nothing whatsoever to do with constitutions, national character, abstract civil libertarian commitments, authoritarian personalities, megalomania, totalitarianism, irrationality, traditional intolerance, 'iron laws of oligarchy' etc.

Thus, in Soviet society, the significant increase in tolerance from the 1930s to 1940s and the 1960s to 1970s would seem to be largely a product of the diminished external threat, the consolidation of the ideological hegemony of socialism, the effective demoralization of old dominant groups, and the reduction of the threat of domestic opposition. Throughout US history, the radical fluctuations in tolerance are a product of periodic involvement in foreign wars, the variation in the domestic threat to private property, and fluctuations in the ideological hegemony of the propertied class. The contemporary variation among the capitalist countries, for example, Guatemala, Uruguay, Indonesia, in contrast to Britain, US 1980 etc., is owing to the far greater level of ideological hegemony of capitalist institutions and the far lesser domestic threat from internal revolutionary forces in the latter countries.

The somewhat higher level of formal public advocacy in the US compared to the USSR today would seem primarily to be as a result of: (1) the ongoing Soviet project to create 'Soviet Man', that is, to develop a collective consciousness in its people, in contrast to American capitalism's aim to perpetuate an individual, competitive consciousness; (2) the continuing, greater international pressure on the Soviet Union (as the second strongest, and relatively isolated, world power) than on the US; (3) the continued need for Soviet socialism to constrain the highly skilled and often ambitious professional intelligentsia, and induce them to serve the working people rather than themselves; (4) the Soviet's greater reliance on popular mobilization and ideological incentives to motivate workers to work and the people in general to perform their roles in



society, in contrast to the purely economic incentives operative in the US; (5) among wide sectors of the Soviet population, there is apparently a strong emotional attachment to Soviet institutions, and thus a deep, spontaneous sense of outrage in the face of dissident criticisms, whereas in the US, for example, at least in the 1970s, emotional commitment to the patriotic cause appears to have been weaker.

## The Class Basis of Civil Liberties

In the words of Leon Whipple: 'Whoever has power has civil liberties'. Lenin expressed the same principle: 'In the final analysis, force alone settles the great problems of political liberty'.<sup>8</sup> To pose the question in terms of 'Freedom' versus 'repression' is, in the last analysis incorrect, for in the real world, the freedom of one group to realize their interests implies the suppression of another's.

Liberty is class based. Christopher Cauldwell has argued:

What, to the proletariat is liberty — the extermination of those bourgeois institutions and relations which hold them in captivity — is necessarily compulsion and restraint to the bourgeois, just as the old bourgeois liberty generated non-liberty for the worker. The two notions of liberty are irreconcilable. Once the proletariat is in power, all attempts to re-establish bourgeois social relations will be attacks on proletarian liberty, and will therefore be repulsed as fiercely as men repulse all attacks on their liberty. This is the meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and why, with it, there is censorship, ideological acerbity, and all the other devices developed by the bourgeois in the evolution of the coercive state which secures its freedom.<sup>9</sup>

How does one judge the superiority of right? Is the right to live in whatever country one wants superior to the right to adequate health care? Is the right of a doctor to emigrate from a less developed socialist country in order to earn \$75,000 a year in a highly developed capitalist country superior to the right of a peasant child to be cured of a potentially fatal disease? Right, then, is a class question. A poor country, which makes a socialist revolution must, of necessity, bring its intellectuals and professionals to serve the needs of the people by restricting their relative privileges, and reorienting them towards meeting the needs of the poor. From an upper middle-class doctor's viewpoint, it is entirely proper that he/she should have the right to emigrate to any country he chooses at any time. But from the point of view of the peasantry (whose labour has provided the means for him or her to receive medical training) it is right to demand that their needs be served rather than, for example, those of middle-class Americans. In general, this same argument applies to skilled workers and professionals from poor countries who emigrate to the wealthier countries which can pay them much more. It is a



question of right versus right: a class question.

The claim by one group of the superiority of its right in relation to that of another group cannot be based on abstract and absolute criteria, but rather only on which claim to right is more *progressive* at a given time. That is upon which best realizes the substantive freedom of the most people, which generates the best standard of living for all, the highest level of human dignity, the most advanced social services and social security, the greatest participation in the decisions that affect one's life. This applies to conflicting claims about property rights (as between feudal landlords, capitalists and workers), about the legitimacy of state power, and to conflicting arguments about the repression of formal liberties. The liberty of the capitalist class to say whatever it likes, go wherever it likes, etc., conflicts with the right of the working people to say whatever they like, go wherever they like, etc., as becomes vividly clear in times of instability, war, and decline of capitalist ideological hegemony, when typically, formal freedoms are suspended. One class's 'freedom' of expression and action necessarily conflicts with another's, as does the freedom of white racists to make anti-Black propaganda necessarily conflict with the freedom of Blacks to civil rights and liberties. The question, therefore, devolves upon whether, at a given time, the predominance of capital over feudalism, of capital over the working class, of the working class over capital, is more, or less, progressive.

Who is to decide upon the limits of 'free speech' must, then, be answered in terms of which social group, which class's liberties, are the most progressive at any given time. At the time of the bourgeois revolution against feudalism, the representatives of the bourgeoisie decided. At the time of the socialist revolution against capitalism and imperialism, the representatives of the working people decide. Some *class* always decides. It is a question only of *which* class. Not until a truly classless society, a society without a state, without the means to suppress anyone's civil liberties, comes into being will tolerance of all opinions become, in itself, a progressive and reasonable goal. Only then, when ideas are no longer class based, when basic racist, sexist, individualist, élitist prejudices have been virtually eliminated, when all people have been fully socialized into co-operative social relationships, can there be a truly 'free marketplace of ideas' where ideas can be judged on their own merits, and not on the basis of class interests and implanted prejudices, and thus the situation in which no one should or can decide for others the limits of freedom truly viable.

## **Disinformation and the Cold War**

As part of national mobilization, each major state will attempt to develop support for its position among those subject to its authority, to undermine support for its competitor states among those subject to their authority, and to win supporters from around the world in its struggle for the system it represents. A primary way to do this is to portray one's own state as the



repository, representative and defender of all that is good in civilization. In previous centuries, religion above all else served this purpose.

In the 20th Century, especially since 1945, the central mobilizing ideas have been 'liberation' and the right to make the decisions that affect one's life – that is, 'freedom'. Both the Communist movement and the 'West', whose leading nation states have been the USSR and the USA respectively, have appealed to sentiments of liberation and self-determination to mobilize the world's people. Both portray themselves as the true defenders of 'real' freedom. However, the specific definition of liberation and self-determination employed by the two competing world systems differs. The US defines freedom in terms of the existence of multi-party parliamentary forms, the existence of formal civil liberties to publicly express opinions in any media without state interference, the right to emigrate, and the right to own and dispose of property in the means of production in any way those with the requisite material resources choose. The Soviets and the world Communist movement (in all its factions) define freedom in terms of the *substance* of state policies serving the interests of working people, rather than an élite propertied class.

The Marxist tradition maintains that in a socialist society, advocacy rights should be permitted only to those who offer basically constructive criticism, while such rights should be denied to those opposed to the system, that is, following the traditional theory of 'the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', subversive views should be contained. The majority of non-Socialist states do not formally differ on this point. Almost all the non-Socialist countries of Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe between the World Wars, and the US in its Red Scare periods, have denied the basic rights of public advocacy to Communists and other anti-capitalist 'subversives'. In times of stability and strong popular support, however, wealthy Western capitalist states, unlike states in the less developed world, are able to maintain parliamentary forms and retain a reasonably high degree of formal advocacy rights. In such times the West criticizes socialist countries on the grounds that they repress formal civil liberties and defines itself as 'free, unlike the USSR'. Such was the basic theme of the Carter administration's Human Rights campaign. Its aim was to generate international support for the cause of the US (a cause that had suffered greatly as a result of US intervention and defeat in Vietnam, and the victorious wave of national liberation movements throughout the less developed world) while attempting to reverse the concomitant significant increase in popular support for the Soviet Union as defender and supplier of so many of these movements.

The Soviet system has proved itself to be superior to the US economic system as a means to develop poor countries, as an efficient industrial system and in its ability to distribute the economic product fairly. The Soviet rate of economic growth per capita in the 1960–70 period was 1.9 times that of the US; and 2.5 times greater over 1970–77. The annual rate of economic growth per capita of all the centrally planned economies in the 1970–77 period was 5.0%. This compares with 2.3% for all the developed market economies;



3.4% for Latin America; 2.5% for Africa; and 2.7% for the market economies of South and Southeast Asia.<sup>10</sup> Projecting the trends in economic growth per capita into the future, and assuming that the 1970s growth rates in the Soviet and US persist for another 30 or so years, the USSR would reach the 1977 per capita income level of the USA in approximately the year 1995 and actually catch up with the USA around the year 2010.

The economic distribution of goods within the socialist countries is considerably more egalitarian than in the capitalist countries. In the USSR in 1975 the ratio of the wage exceeded by the top 10% to that [wage] exceeded by 90% was 2.9, while in the US it was 6.2. The astronomical incomes of the richest few thousand Americans are non-existent in the USSR.<sup>11</sup> Around 1970 the top 5% of households in the German Democratic Republic had 9.2% of total income while the top 20% had 30.7%. This compares with the equivalent figures of 16.6% and 45.7% in the USA; and 37.8% and 63.2% in Mexico at the same time; that is, in the US the richest 5% had 1.8 times more, and in Mexico 4.1 times more, of the total national income than they did in socialist Germany.<sup>12</sup>

It is becoming increasingly difficult to convince the people of the world, especially the working people of the less developed countries, that Western capitalism is superior to Soviet socialism on economic grounds. The Soviets are clearly demonstrating that their system can 'deliver the goods'. Part of the West's claim for superiority is, however, still based on the fallacious argument that the standard of living in the West is higher than in the Socialist countries, and correspondingly, that the West's higher standard of living is a result of capitalism. But the West's higher living standards are solely the outcome of advanced capitalist countries' higher level of development when the competition with the socialist system began; neither did they experience anything approaching the level of World War II devastation wrought in the East. As differentials in the standard of living between the East and the West diminish, as the superior growth rates of the socialist countries have their effect, the fallaciousness of this argument becomes obvious.

Likewise, in terms of basic social welfare, the Soviet system has proved to be far superior to those capitalist countries at the same level of economic development. In terms of basic humaneness and consideration for the day-to-day needs of its people, it would be impossible for the West successfully to compete against the Soviets.

The one area in which the West can still make a credible case for superiority is in the realm of 'freedom'. Freedom to publish or read anything without restraint, and freedom to attempt to become rich, are the two most important.

It is no accident that day after day the Western mass media gives prominent attention to the dissidents in the Soviet Union, to the attempted 'escapes' from the German Democratic Republic, to the flight of 'boat people' from Vietnam, the restrictions on books at the Moscow International Book Fair, and so on. But these events are virtually insignificant in comparison with the denial of civil liberties, massive deaths through repression, malnutrition and preventable disease, and other sufferings in US-supported states in Asia and



Latin America. The relative handful of Soviet dissidents have been elevated to the status of international heroes and their every proclamation circulated around the world, but hardly anyone in the US realizes that repression is qualitatively greater in US client states, and that very few know the names of any of the hundreds of thousands of people murdered for their political beliefs by 'friendly' governments in these countries in recent years.

The prominent media and US government concern with 'Human Rights' in the late 1970s, and in a somewhat different way in the early 1980s, was an attempt to resuscitate the cold war with the Soviet Union in order to mobilize the US people to willingly support measures necessary to once again facilitate the US's effective intervention in Asia, Africa and Latin America (and, when necessary, in Europe). After a virtual stalemate since 1949, national liberation movements have made considerable advances since the 1975 victory of the Vietnamese. Not only South Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos, but also Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan have acquired revolutionary anti-imperialist regimes. In 1978 and 1979, Iran, Nicaragua and Grenada overthrew conservative, US-sponsored regimes, indicating that revolutionary waves could soon spread throughout both the Near East and the Caribbean — and all of Latin America. The best strategy for the US is to portray the rising wave of revolution (Communist and non-Communist led) as Soviet inspired, and thus to mobilize American and world opinion against the Soviet Union, and thereby enable the US state to reinstitute the draft, increase military spending (on conventional as well as nuclear arms) and above all, reverse the 'post-Vietnam syndrome' of resistance to the use of US troops to intervene against revolutions in the less developed countries.

The 'loss' of Vietnam left a dangerous residue of distaste among the American people for similar interventions. A residue that has seriously obstructed the US's ability to prevent leftist developments in Angola, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and elsewhere from taking place. The Soviet Union has been a major arms supplier, as well as a source of ideological inspiration and political support for most of the recent revolutions, thus making credible the attempt to identify liberation movements with the USSR. Central to the US campaign to mobilize the American people's support for future interventions was the 'Human Rights' campaign's focus on the limitations on advocacy rights in the USSR, a campaign based on a gross distortion of world reality in the interests of US imperialism. Support for regimes such as those of Thieu in Vietnam, Marcos in the Philippines, Park in South Korea, the military dictatorships of Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Indonesia and Thailand is thus generated in the name of 'freedom'. Such regimes are anti-Communist and anti-Soviet, and take the measures necessary to prevent Communist revolution (which would, 'as in the Soviet Union, deny civil liberties'). Thus virtual 'non-issues' such as the judicious suppression (by historical standards) of the dissident movement in the USSR are employed to obscure the really central issue in the world today — the ongoing struggles of the world's people for national liberation and socialism.

To quote Chomsky and Herman:



The success of the Free Press in reconstructing imperial ideology since the US withdrawal from Indochina has been spectacular. The shift of the United States from causal agent to concerned bystander – and even to leader in the world struggle for human rights – in the face of its empire of client fascism and long vicious assault on the peasant societies of Indochina, is a remarkable achievement. The system of brainwashing under freedom, with mass media voluntary self censorship in accord with the larger interests of the state, has worked brilliantly. The new propaganda line has been established by endless repetition of the Big Distortions. . . .

There is, to be sure, an element of absurdity in the constant refrain that socialism equals Gulag, as revealed by events in the underdeveloped societies. A comparison of the problems facing such societies as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Cuba, Mozambique, etc., with the situation in the industrial West would simply be ridiculed in societies that were not subjected to such effective ideological control as ours. But despite the inherent absurdity of attributing say, revenge killings by Cambodian peasants who were bombed out of their homes by Western force to 'Marxism' or 'atheism', the practice is common and quite successful as a tactic in engineering consent to the priorities and structures of contemporary state capitalism.<sup>13</sup>

## **Trends in Rights in Capitalist and Socialist Societies**

Owing to the different levels of economic development of Western Europe/the USA/Japan and the Eastern European Socialist countries/Cuba/China/Vietnam, etc., and because of the problems of developing socialist institutions under conditions of systematic opposition by the militarily and economically strongest powers\* any comparison between the two sets of countries is necessarily heavily biased in favour of the West. With only 65 years to validate socialist institutions, starting from a very poor economic base without any external assistance, comparisons with the USA which, in 1917, was the richest society in the world, and in 1945 had 50% of the world's GNP, as well as unquestioned military superiority (including a monopoly on atomic weapons) and allies everywhere, are heavily loaded against the USSR. Nevertheless, even with these disadvantages the Soviets have done remarkably well in *all* areas of basic rights and freedoms.

What can be expected (barring a general nuclear catastrophe, tragically a very real possibility), over the next generation in the two sets of countries? With the economic differential in rates of growth and increases in working-class

\* And for the Soviet Union, the absence of any concrete example to guide policy, two major military interventions by the Western powers, and the need to keep up militarily with the USA.



living standards becoming greater in the Soviet Union, with the legitimacy of Soviet institutions showing signs of growth rather than deterioration, and the urbanization and industrialization of Soviet society almost completed, a further increase in economic and participatory rights, as well as in advocacy rights in the USSR can be anticipated. There would appear to be no obstacle to the acceleration of the tendency to increase popular participation at all levels of Soviet society. Likewise, given the system's high level of legitimacy and the decreasing threat of externally supported subversion (as the military and economic power of the Soviet Union in relation to the West increases) there is every reason to project a continuing expansion of the level of tolerance. Economic and social security should also continue to be enhanced. The social wage should continue to increase as a proportion of total consumption, with more and more goods and services provided on the basis of the communist principle of right. The quality of such public services as child care, medicine, and housing will undoubtedly improve, since the quantity of services currently available has finally approximated public demand, that is, intensive rather than extensive strategies of providing goods and services should increasingly predominate.

Future developments in basic economic rights (social and economic security) as well as the continuation of the formal rights of political participation and the rather high level of formal advocacy rights characteristic of the advanced capitalist countries in the 1960s and 1970s is contingent upon the continued ability of Western capitalism to prosper and increase the living standards of working people. In the early 1980s, however, there are strong indications that Western capitalism's ability to continually improve living standards has significantly declined, if it has not actually reversed. The expansion of social security/welfare systems, and the continuation of formal political participation/civil liberties in the West in the post-World War II period has been contingent on an 'expanding pie', and consequently on there being no need for the capitalist class to cut down working class living standards. A consequence which would produce a legitimization crisis and, perhaps, a popular anti-capitalist movement which would necessitate a wave of repression of advocacy rights and restrictions on formal participation; such a development would be a repetition of what occurred in most capitalist countries in the 1930s, and in most non-European capitalist countries in the 1970s.

Movements to curtail social services are becoming increasingly prominent in Western countries (for example, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the United States) as it becomes clear that growing social services are undermining capital accumulation. Funds contributed to popular consumption are not invested, and goods provided as a matter of right (as well as growing job rights) undermine the work incentive of workers, and hence result in lowering productivity.

The creeping economic crisis of the advanced capitalist countries manifested in a declining rate of productivity increase, declining rates of growth in living standards, the rapid increase in unemployment, and accelerating inflation, could — in an attempt to boost productivity and the funds available for investment, and hence raise profitability and accelerate the capital



accumulation process — result in a major reversal of the economic security advances of the post-World War II period. The response to such cut backs in economic rights as well as the stagnation, if not decline, in working class living standards could conceivably be manifested in either a revival of working class radicalism or of massive fascist movements.

As typically happens in the face of 'social disorders' and growing anti-capitalist movements, it can be expected that the extraordinarily high level of political tolerance and civil liberties characteristic of Western Europe in the post-World War II generation will be undermined. Parliamentary forms will possibly be abolished or greatly constricted in the least prosperous and potentially most unstable of the countries (Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and perhaps France, Germany, Ireland and even the UK) as indeed they were in most cases in the pre-World War II period.

In the area of minority civil rights, the tendency for the Western capitalist countries to increase the rights of minorities seems to have reached its peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The United Kingdom has progressively adopted more restrictive immigration policies, as has most of continental Europe. Little improvement in the position of Asian, African and Southern European immigrants in Northern Europe should be expected; especially vis-à-vis economic rights, pressure to expel and to increase restrictions on immigrants (and their descendants) should be expected to increase. In times of economic crisis, racist attitudes and measures normally increase and will probably do so in the future. Likewise, in the US, although a proportion of Blacks are becoming integrated into the US middle class, a much larger segment are being frozen into the underclass of the decaying urban ghettos, while a whole new wave of immigrants from Latin America are becoming the primary source of menial labour — and thus increasingly become the primary victims of racism. Many of the new Latin immigrant labourers have no legal status in the US, and thus have fewer rights than the 'guest workers' of Europe. It should be emphasized that capitalist economies generate racism primarily because of their need for a continuing source of cheap, hard working menial labour from outside the major industrial regions. Racism serves both as a legitimization of the treatment of such workers and as a means to disorganize the working class as a whole by dividing the new immigrant menial workers from the rest of the working class. As long as capitalism exists, racism will be generated. There is no such logic in socialist societies. The contrast between the various minorities in the Soviet Union, especially the Asian peoples, and the position of minorities in capitalist Europe and the US is likely to become all the more stark over the next generation. The same might perhaps also be said of the position of women, while continuing progress is made by Soviet women.

Projecting oneself into the year 2050 (assuming, probably unrealistically, the absence of a general nuclear war) and looking back on the period of the birth of socialist societies, probably the political repression in the Soviet Union of the 1930s will be seen in a similar light to that in which the repression of aristocrats and their supporters by the French Revolution or Loyalists by the American Revolution is regarded in the 1980s. The historical



conjuncture in which the level of civil liberties has been higher in the advanced capitalist countries than in the advanced socialist countries cannot be expected to last. As capitalism declines and is subject to increasing international and domestic pressure, measures similar to those taken in the 1930s in the advanced capitalist countries, and those in most of the poorer capitalist countries in the 1960s and 1970s, can be expected. As more and more countries become socialist, and living standards in the advanced socialist countries come to outstrip those in the West, the process of 'the withering away of the state' should accelerate, with both decentralized participation and ever more vital and unconstricted public debates broadening in their significance. If, in fact, the tendency towards encroaching stagnation of Western capitalism is consolidated, while the current tendencies of Soviet socialism continue, the 21st Century will see a very different picture of civil liberties and standard of living. than did the mid-20th Century. As Eastern European living standards come to exceed those in Western Europe we would expect an increased flow of unemployed low paid Western workers emigrating to the socialist countries in search of high paid and secure work. Very possibly, in fact, in the early part of the 21st Century the German Democratic Republic will remove restrictions on emigration, and begin the active recruitment of workers from West Germany. This could well be followed by the West Germans imposing restrictions on the emigration of its citizens to the German Democratic Republic. A flow of workers *towards* the socialist countries, which may be expected to become more common over time, would thus be augmented by a similar flow of intellectuals and political activists (and perhaps persecuted minorities) reacting to growing restrictions on formal political and civil liberties in the West — and accelerated by shrinking employment possibilities in the state sector for intellectuals).

'Freedom', the most inspiring slogan of the 20th Century, can increasingly be expected to slip from the grasp of Western capitalism (as it already has from most capitalist regimes in Asia and Latin America). A progressive decline and eventual collapse may be anticipated in the credibility of increasingly repressive regimes with stagnant living standards that appeal to their people to support monopoly capitalism, with the claim that their system offers superior civil, economic and participatory rights and civil liberties. With the slogan of 'human rights' and 'freedom' increasingly lost by capitalists to the Socialist world, other means of legitimation will be sought (as they were sought and found in Europe in the 1930s). Nationalist, Christian and Fascist movements (for example, The Moral Majority, the KKK in the US) will probably be revived with the active support of capital, movements which emphasize neither the superiority of capitalism in providing a higher living standard *nor* a higher level of participatory rights, civil liberties or economic rights, but rather stress intangibles such as the national dignity, Christian morality or the 'Aryan race', as well as authoritarian leadership principles, such as the Latin American and Asian dictatorships do today. But in the face of an increasingly prosperous, participatory and tolerant socialist world, an attempt to revitalize nationalism and mysticism in order to justify ever more repressive capitalist regimes will



potentially be characterized in the same manner as Marx categorized the regime of Napoleon the III in France: 'The first time as tragedy, the second as farce.'

## Notes

1. Hough and Fainsod, 1979; Szymanski, 1979, ch. 5.
2. *New York Times*, 21 March 1982, p. 12.
3. Marcuse, 1965, pp. 110-1.
4. Chomsky and Herman, 1979b, pp. 30, 300.
5. Durkheim, 1915.
6. See Mao Tse-tung, 1957.
7. Charles Beard, 1913; Louis Hacker, 1940.
8. Lenin, 1905, Vol. I, p. 499.
9. Cauldwell, 1971, pp. 201-2
10. See Szymanski, 1981, Table 10.1.
11. See Szymanski, 1979, pp. 64-6.
12. *Ibid.*, Table 10.13.
13. Chomsky and Herman, 1979b, pp. 297-300.



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